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Shakespeare in Purgatory
A Study of the Catholicising Movement
in Shakespeare Biography

by

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for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Renaissance Studies

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So many people have encouraged me.

O wonder!

How many goodly creatures are there here!

How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world

That has such people in 't!

The Tempest, V.1.182–5



Declaration

The present thesis is my own work except where it contains references, and it has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

Summary

The twentieth and the twenty-first centuries have *Catholicised* Shakespeare. At the heart of this movement lie the so-called Lancastrian theories: that Shakespeare spent some time during his 'lost years' in Lancashire and that he is to be identified with 'Will[i]am Shakeshafte' in the will of the Catholic magnate, Alexander Houghton of Lea. Although the proponents of the theories — aptly called 'Lancastrians' — agree in terms of the identification of 'Shakeshafte' with Shakespeare, their arguments vary and sometimes even contradict each other. We have, therefore, Lancastrian theories (plural). They are attempts to investigate the whereabouts of Shakespeare during the 'lost years' and to find out the means by which he entered the London theatre.

The Lancastrian theories can be seen in part as a counter-movement against recent Shakespeare scholarship that has been preoccupied with theory. Paradoxically, another stimulus for the revival of biographical studies is literary critics' interest in early modern history, which materialist criticism, especially new historicism, has brought in since the 1980s. Religion has become a major issue in Shakespeare studies. The modern historiography of the English Reformation, especially 'revisionism', which emphasises the continuation of medieval Catholicism after the Reformation, has provided significant energy for the development of the Lancastrian theories. Furthermore, the Lancastrians have their own agenda — personal ambitions and motivations, some of which are not altogether scholarly.

However, these theories are for the most part based on a chain of speculations, and tend to state them as fact. The biographers, whether Lancastrians or not, who believe Shakespeare and his family to have been Catholics are unfamiliar with the religious condition in Elizabethan England, including anti-Catholic acts and the penalties imposed on recusants. Their arguments also neglect other Elizabethan customs. These biographers' lack of profound knowledge of socio-political and religious history of Elizabethan England has produced inaccurate dramatisation of Shakespeare's life. One other disabling tendency among these biographers is to neglect negative evidence and disregard alternative interpretations. Their approaches to Shakespeare biography simplify the complexity of documentary evidence and produce narrowness of view.

In Elizabethan England a series of continuous religious negotiations and renegotiations took place. Through this struggle, the clear-cut division between Catholicism and Protestantism was deconstructed, and there emerged 'religious pluralism' — a compromise between Catholicism and Protestantism. It was in this complex matrix that Shakespeare was born, grew up and wrote plays and poems. It is against this cultural background that we should study Shakespeare's life (or lives).

Abbreviations

<i>Acts of the Privy Council</i>	<i>Acts of the Privy Council of England</i> , 46 vols, ed. by John Roche Dasent and others (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1890–1964)
<i>Compact Documentary Life</i>	S. Schoenbaum, <i>William Shakespeare: A Compact Documentary Life</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977; revised edn with a new postscript, 1987)
<i>CSP, Domestic</i>	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reigns of Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth</i> , ed. by Robert Lemon (I–II) and Mary Anne Everett Green (III–XII), 12 vols, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1856–72; repr. Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus, 1967)
<i>CSP, Foreign, Elizabeth</i>	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth</i> , ed. by Joseph Stevenson and Arthur John Butler, 13 vols (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1863–1903; repr., Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus, 1966)
<i>DNB</i>	<i>The Dictionary of National Biography from the Earliest Times to 1900</i> , ed. by Leslie Stephen, and Sidney Lee (London: Oxford University Press, 1921–2)
<i>Documentary Life</i>	S. Schoenbaum, <i>William Shakespeare: A Documentary Life</i> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975)
<i>Facts and Problems</i>	E. K. Chambers, <i>William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems</i> , 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930)
<i>Man and Artist</i>	Edgar I. Fripp, <i>Shakespeare: Man and Artist</i> , 2 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1938; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964)
<i>Minutes and Accounts</i>	<i>Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon and Other Documents</i> , 5 vols (I: Oxford: Frederick Hall; II–IV: London: Oxford University Press; V: Hertford: Stephen Austin and Sons, 1921–90), I–IV ed. by Edgar I. Fripp; V ed. by Levi Fox
<i>OED</i>	<i>The Oxford English Dictionary</i> , ed. by James Murray and others (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933; 2nd edn, 1989)

- Outlines* J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare* (Brighton, 1881; 7th edn, 2 vols, London: Longmans, 1887) I have used the 7th edition, as most biographers have done, because it includes more sources and provides more updated discussion than the previous editions.
- Salisbury* Historical Manuscript Commission, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. The Marquis of Salisbury, K. G., &c. &c. &c. Preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode for Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1883–1976)
- STC* *Short-title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, & Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475-1640* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1926; 2nd edn, 1976–91)
- TLS* *Times Literary Supplement, The*

List of Illustrations

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1. Title-page of *The Famous History of Guy Earl of Warwick* (1600)
2. Guy of Warwick as one of the nine Worthies (1584)
3. Collegiate Church of St. Bartholomew (Tong, Shropshire)
4. Two halves of the epitaph on the tomb of the Stanley family
5. Tomb of the Stanley family
6. The Stanley monument (before the pyramids were moved to the top)

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7. *Englands Helicon* (1600)
8. *Rosalynde: Euphues golden legacie* (1592)
9. *The Phoenix Nest* (1593)
10. Hoghton Tower (near Preston, Lancashire)

At the end of chapter 5 (between 282 and 283)

11. *A Discouerie of I. Nicols, minister, misreported a Iesuite, latelye recanted in the Tower of London* (1581)
12. William Allen
13. *The New Testament of Iesvs Christ, translated faithfvly into English, out of the authentical Latin* (1582)

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I should like to acknowledge the following sources of illustrations:

Wing F375 (plate 1); Richard Lloyd, *A briefe discourse of the most renowned actes and right valiant conquests of those puissant Princes, called the Nine worthies* (1584), *STC* 16634 (plate 2); *Milton Quarterly* 33 (1999) < http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/milton_quarterly > (plates 3–6); The British Library (plates 7–9 and 12–3); Houghton Tower website < <http://www.hoghtontower.co.uk> > (plate 10); *STC* 19402 (plate 11); *The Observer Review*, 21 April 2002, p. 5 (plate 14).

Conventions and Procedures

The citations from Shakespeare are, unless otherwise stated, to the text and the act, scene and line numbers in *The Norton Shakespeare* edited by Stephen Greenblatt and others (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997). The references to the statutes (acts) are to *The Statutes of the Realm* edited by A. Luders and others, 11 vols (London: Record Commission, 1810–28). Original spelling (including ‘v’ for ‘u’ and ‘i’ for ‘j’) and punctuation are preserved in my transcriptions of early modern materials. This practice includes ‘M^r’ which signifies ‘Master’ as distinct from the modern ‘Mr’ on the basis that in Shakespeare’s day the title of Master conveyed a degree of social distinction or gentleness. In Shakespeare’s time, the year, following the Julian calendar, officially began on Lady Day, 25 March; however, ‘popular’ — as distinguished from governmental and ecclesiastical — practice is known to have varied. In citing dates, I have followed the civil calendar and revised the year where it is clear and the practice is considered appropriate.

Transcription Conventions

[. . .] editorial expansions, alterations or ellipsis of original letters

< . . . > lost or illegible letters in the original

(. . .) parentheses in the original

Introduction

For a long period 'the author' had been a dead issue in literary and theatre studies. Over the last two decades or so, however, there has been a revival of interest in biography. An obvious measurement of this movement is the growing number of biographical projects in the United Kingdom: the ongoing project of *The New Dictionary of National Biography* and the foundation of the new AHRB Centre for Editing Lives and Letters ('CELL') at Queen Mary, University of London. In addition, such conferences as 'New Directions in Biographies of Shakespeare, Marlowe and Jonson' (organised by the Centre for the Study of the Renaissance, University of Warwick, in September 2001) and 'Early Modern Lives: Biography and Autobiography of the Renaissance and Seventeenth Century' (the Renaissance Research Group, Middlesex University, in June 2002) are not merely responses to this phenomenon. They actively promote developments of it. The energy, therefore, circulates both ways.

Shakespeare is not an exception. This circulation of energy among academia, the biographers, the film industry (popular culture), marketing (the economy) and the mass media is a significant phenomenon of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This phenomenon, of course, has been carried further by a popular culture of the stage, film and TV productions of Shakespeare's plays.

The study and publication of Shakespeare biography cannot be grasped in isolation from these complex cultural circumstances.¹ Meaning is produced in the 'conjugated' work of the author and the reader; both the author and the readers are

¹ For the relationship between Shakespeare's plays (rather than biography) and his cultural authority, especially in terms of the commercial market and artefacts, from the sixteenth century to the present, see Michael D. Bristol, *Big-time Shakespeare* (London: Routledge, 1996). For the afterlife of

‘agencies’ in the process of the production of meaning.² We can apply this theory to biographical writing. A biography is the biographer’s interpretation of an author; the biographer is a reader of another author’s life — in Frédéric Regard’s words, ‘a subjective interpreter of another subjectivity’.³ In this sense, biographical study is a unique genre that implicates two authors: it involves the life of an author interpreted and described by another author (biographer). Biographical studies in the postmodernist era, therefore, must not be regarded as nostalgia for or return to the pre-modernist era. The new biography is a complex, and even paradoxical, undertaking; it must involve a scrutiny of the context in which the author lived and an awareness that the text we examine was conditioned by that particular context. We must also understand that the meaning that the biographer produces is also subject to the wider cultural environment in which he or she lives. Biography thus creates a dialogue between the past and the present. In this perspective, the study of Shakespeare biography cannot be grasped in isolation from these complex cultural circumstances both in the past and in the present.

In the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries there has been a distinctive movement in Shakespeare studies: *Catholicisation* of the dramatist’s works and life. At the heart of this phenomenon in biographical studies lie the so-called Lancastrian theories: that Shakespeare spent some time during his ‘lost years’ in Lancashire and that he is to be identified with ‘Will[i]am Shakeshafte’ in the will of the Catholic magnate, Alexander Houghton of Lea. Although Lancastrians agree in terms of the

Shakespeare in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Jonathan Bate, *Shakespearean Constitutions: Politics, Theatre, Criticism 1730–1830* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), and for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Gary Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare: A Cultural History from the Restoration to the Present* (London: Hogarth, 1990). In his more recent article Taylor argues that the peak of Shakespeare’s reputation is over and that his afterlife is declining (‘Afterword: The Incredible Shrinking Bard’, in *Shakespeare and Appropriation*, ed. by Christy Desmet and Robert Sawyer, Accents on Shakespeare series (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 197–205).

² Frédéric Regard, ‘The Ethics of Biographical Reading: A Pragmatic Approach’, *The Cambridge Quarterly* 29 (2000), 394–408 (p 399).

³ *Ibid.*, 400.

identification of ‘Shakeshafte’ with Shakespeare, their supporting arguments vary and sometimes contradict each other. We have, therefore, Lancastrian theories (plural).

The present thesis considers the problem of recent Shakespeare biography by concentrating on these theories. It presents a history or development, as comprehensive as possible, of the theories, drawing on studies of the religious context in which Shakespeare lived *and* of the twentieth- and twenty-first-century environment in which the theories have been produced. It also exposes problems hidden in the theories and points out other issues to be considered.

Chapters 1 and 2 scrutinise the intellectual environment in which the Lancastrians have formulated their theories. The revival of the interest in biography can be seen in part as a counter-movement against recent Shakespeare scholarship that has been preoccupied with theory. Paradoxically, another stimulus for this revival is literary critics’ interest in early modern history, which new historicism has brought in since the 1980s. Materialist critics’ theoretical interest in ideology and discourse made religion a major issue in Shakespeare studies. These phenomena are examined in chapter 1.

Catholicisation of Shakespeare is partly to do with timing. When new historicism began to draw biographers’ attention to the religious history of early modern England, it was ‘revisionism’, which emphasises the continuity of medieval Catholicism after the Reformation, that was beginning to dominate the field by replacing A. G. Dickens’s ‘rapid Reformation from below’ as a new orthodoxy. Therefore, in chapter 2, I examine the recent historiography of the English Reformation, especially the key concept of ‘revisionism’, which provided significant energy for the development of the Lancastrian theories, in order to show its influence on the Lancastrians in the last two decades of the twentieth century.

There is another stimulus. The Lancastrians themselves have their own agenda — personal ambitions and motivations, some of which are not altogether scholarly. In one case, the Lancastrian enterprise can be seen as part of the *institutionalisation* of Shakespeare in Britain. One school of materialist criticism known as cultural materialism (which is examined along with new historicism in chapter 1) has focused on the ways in which Shakespeare is used to construct ideology and discourse in society. These cases are analysed in chapter 5 as part of the development of the Lancastrian theories.

Chapters 3–5 scrutinise the Lancastrian theories themselves in depth. In chapters 3 and 4, I examine the chronological development of the theories. The Lancastrians, together with non-Lancastrians, have looked into Shakespeare's religious background during his childhood and youth, which they believe may have brought the boy Shakespeare into the Lancashire Catholic network during his 'lost years'. In chapter 5, I examine this as part of the biographical study, which includes a series of events in the lives of his parents as well as his own marriage.

Biographers who believe Shakespeare and his family to have been Catholics tend to select evidence that would strengthen their own argument and neglect negative evidence and counter-arguments that would otherwise weaken or even contradict their theories. They also tend to disregard alternative interpretations of documentary evidence. These selective activities have allowed them to *Catholicise* Shakespeare and his family. However, their approaches to Shakespeare biography simplify the complexity of documentary evidence and inevitably produce narrowness of view. In chapters 3–5, therefore, not only do I re-examine the evidence and the interpretations of the evidence presented by the Catholicising biographers, but I also expose various types of problems hidden in their arguments and point out other issues to be considered.

One other problem of the Lancastrian theories and the Catholicisation of the dramatist is the biographers' belief in the clear-cut division between Catholicism and Protestantism in Elizabethan England. The ecclesiastical condition in England was not as simple and straightforward as these biographers appear to expect it to be. In the final chapter, therefore, I examine *religious pluralism* developed during the Elizabethan period.

The Lancastrian theories have drawn severe criticism from other critics, and created a split in Shakespeare studies. The split continues to deepen. At the beginning of the new century there has been an attempt on both sides of the Atlantic to provide more scholarly biographical study of Shakespeare, based more solidly on evidence with which our imagination can work to fill the gap between one piece of evidence and another. The present thesis is not only a reflection of this new movement but also aims to promote it.

To achieve this goal, the present thesis carries a great number of footnotes. Some of the biographers I examine — whether academics or non-academics — have a tendency not to specify their sources. Scholars and students are aware of plagiarism. (A recent survey in Australia shows that 80% of university students have admitted to plagiarising. It would not be surprising if we have a similar statistic in the UK.) Failure to identify sources is not simply a matter of plagiarism. It is a serious methodological problem. Biographers must distinguish evidence, fact and interpretation. Acknowledgment and clarification of sources is a first step towards serious biography.



Most publications after mid-April 2003 are not examined in the present thesis. I regret that they came out too close to my submission date to be given careful analysis. Of

great interest among them is John Finnis and Patrick Martin's *TLS* article on Shakespeare's 'Let the bird of loudest lay' (18 April 2003). Finnis and Martin identify the phoenix and the turtledove in Shakespeare's poem with the Catholic martyr Anne Line, and her husband Roger. I have added reference information for this article, along with that of the *TLS* readers' responses, at the end of the bibliography.

Readers will notice that the present thesis neither examines Shakespeare's later years nor discusses much about those plays and poems in which critics find Catholic elements, unless they relate to the Lancastrian theories. This is simply because of the limitation of the period of my research and the restriction of the length of the doctoral thesis. These are two of many areas in Shakespeare scholarship that require more cautious studies in the future.

Conservative and Radical Shakespeares: Recent Scholarship and the Revival of Biography

I. The Death of the Author

Over the last three decades Shakespeare scholarship has witnessed profound changes under the influence of a modern French intellectual movement of the 1960s and the 1970s — namely, postmodernism. One of the most influential French thinkers was Roland Barthes. In 1968 Barthes published his famous essay ‘The Death of the Author’ in *Matéia*, in which he argued:

A text is [. . .] a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of cultures. [. . .] the writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest in any one of them. Did he wish to *express himself*, he ought at least to know that the inner ‘thing’ he thinks to ‘translate’ is itself only a ready-formed dictionary, its words only explainable through other words, and so on indefinitely. [. . .] a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, [and] contestation [. . .] we know that to give writing its future, it is necessary to overthrow the myth: the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author.¹

Barthes’s essay is usually quoted as an example of poststructuralist semiotics of the signifier and the signified. I would like to pay attention to Barthes’s perspective of ideology and discourse in this citation.

Although he does not use the terms ‘ideology’ or ‘discourse’ in this passage, the meanings of these concepts are clear. For Barthes any text is made up of other texts, which present a type of discourse. Furthermore, the texts (each presenting a set

¹ Roland Barthes, ‘La mort de l’auteur’, *Mantéia* 5 (1968); translated under the title ‘The Death of the Author’, in *Image Music Text*, ed. and trans. by Steven Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), pp. 142–48 (pp. 146–48).

of discourses) out of which the author produces a text are also made up of other texts, and this reductive argument continues endlessly. For Barthes, therefore, the text is simply ‘a tissue of quotations’ from other texts and is ‘a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash’. The author’s job is to recycle discourses available to him or her. Barthes thus denies the originality of the author’s work: ‘the writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original’, and the author’s only power is ‘to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them’. For Barthes, therefore, traditional literary criticism engaged with the author has no future. In what way, and to what extent, has the postmodernist notion of ideology and discourse influenced Shakespeare studies?

II. Materialist Criticism

In 1991 Ivo Kamps noted:

today there is a feeling of deep apprehension among many of them [traditional literary critics] that the Left will soon control English departments, the curriculum, and the professional journals and university presses — an apprehension manifesting itself in the call to rescue the traditional canon of Western Civilization from being dislodged from anthologies and course syllabi by the literature of women, minorities, and ideologies.²

Kamps’ prediction was accurate; as Edward Pechter noted four years later, these recent approaches to Shakespeare have ‘considerably eroded the authority of traditional modes of Shakespeare criticism’.³ New schools of criticism have called into question traditional ways of interpreting texts and have reread Shakespeare’s works with new sets of premises. Traditional interpretations and methodologies have

² Ivo Kamps, introduction to *Shakespeare Left and Right* (London and New York; Routledge, 1991), p. 1.

³ Edward Pechter, *What Was Shakespeare?: Renaissance Plays and Changing Critical Practice* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. ix.

been overhauled, criticised, and marginalized if not yet totally displaced.⁴ Most recently, ‘sweeping studies of Shakespeare’s critical and cultural reception’ have demonstrated ‘the socially constructed character of the Shakespeare phenomenon and canon’.⁵

There are a number of differences and contradictions both among and within the new modes of reading Shakespeare, and the wide-ranging disagreements are beyond resolution. However, one of the features common to these new approaches is the rethinking of biography. The most radical forms of postmodernism deny the notion of the subject as the ‘individual’; they insist that the subject is (to use Louis Althusser’s well-known term) ‘interpellated’ by a complex network of ideological forces which totally control the subject’s intellectual domain. In the 1980s and 1990s this understanding of the subject as a product of cultural forces or discourse gave birth to a variety of *materialisms* — such as Marxism, new historicism, cultural materialism, and feminism (materialist feminism or feminist materialism) — whose approaches focused upon ‘various ways in which the playwright’s texts participate in, are subversive of, or reflect on Renaissance institutional practice and ideologies designed to oppress and control the people’.⁶

It is with this awareness of (and often exclusive focus upon) ‘ideology’ in a certain culture and the society of a particular historical moment — whether in the past or in the present — that recent Shakespeare studies diverge from traditional ones. Traditional humanist critics are essentialists in that they see the self or subjectivity as a pre-socio-cultural entity which is essentially unchanging; they believe that human

⁴ Kamps declared in 1995 that traditional approaches to the literary text had been displaced. In the same year, Edward Pechter argued that they had not been replaced with the new modes of criticism; ‘on the contrary’, said Pechter, ‘traditional critical concerns substantially survive even (maybe especially) in the work of critics for whom such residual presences are the least welcome’ (*Shakespeare Left and Right*, p. ix).

⁵ Kamps, introduction to *Materialist Shakespeare* (London and New York: Verso, 1995), p. 14.

⁶ Kamps, introduction to *Shakespeare Left and Right*, p. 1.

nature transcends various environmental — social, historical, economical, political — influences. Alongside the claim that the subjectivity is essentially unchanging, traditional humanists contend that the literary text is of timeless significance; therefore, they tend to privilege literature at the expense of economic, social, and cultural history.

As Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor claim, 'probably more than any other figure in western culture', Shakespeare has been used to secure this assumption; in Ben Jonson's famous words, Shakespeare is 'not of an age, but for all time'. For the traditional humanists, Shakespeare functions as 'cultural Esperanto, a medium through which the differences of material existence — differences of race, gender, class, history, and culture — are supposedly cancelled'. He has been repeatedly presented as a writer who can transcend such differences 'to get at the abiding truths of human existence'.⁷ As Kamps concisely summarises the situation, traditional humanists believe that Shakespeare 'transcends his historical moment' because 'his genius allowed him to capture what is most true, universal, and enduring about human nature'.⁸

To the contrary, recent materialist critics are constructionists in that they claim that subjectivity is a socio-culturally formed entity, which changes through time within a culture and differs among cultures. They question and attempt to *demythologise* or *demystify* the belief (or *myth* for them) of Shakespeare's universality. Moreover, they insist that the subject is interpellated by the ideological forces in the culture of a certain historical moment.

⁷ Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor, introduction to *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology* (New York and London: Methuen, 1987), p. 4.

⁸ Kamps, introduction to *Shakespeare Left and Right*, p. 1.

The shift of Shakespeare criticism and the differences of approach to Shakespeare's plays between traditional humanism and recent materialism are clear when we compare anthologies of critical essays published in the 1960s and 1970s with those of the 1980s. In his *What Was Shakespeare?: Renaissance Plays and Changing Critical Practice*, Edward Pechter examines five anthologies from the 1960s and the 1970s: Leonard F. Dean's *Shakespeare: Modern Essays in Criticism* (1957; revised edition 1967), Edward Bloom's *Shakespeare, 1564–1964: A Collection of Modern Essays by Various Hands* (1964), Norman Rabkin's *Approaches to Shakespeare* (1964), James L. Calderwood and Harold E. Toliver's *Essays in Shakespeare Criticism* (1970), and Alvin B. Kernan's *Modern Shakespearean Criticism: Essays on Style, Dramaturgy, and the Major Plays* (1970).

The editors of the 1960–70s anthologies, with the exception of Rabkin's *Approaches to Shakespeare*, make (in Dean's words) 'no effort [. . .] to represent systematically whatever schools of criticism may exist'. The essays in these anthologies 'reflect contemporary interest in poetic language, the aesthetics of drama, the Elizabethan theatre, and Renaissance modes of thought' and show 'recent emphasis on patterns of imagery and the structure of ironic drama [among] other topics'.⁹ The editors of the anthologies (once again with the exception of Rabkin) organise the chapters by genre or select essays for each of Shakespeare's major plays; they seem to agree that 'rather than force essays into groups based on method, which would imply the division of criticism into certain well defined sects', it is better 'to let the organization of the selections [of the essays] derive from the plays themselves'.¹⁰

⁹ Leonard F. Dean, introduction to *Shakespeare: Modern Essays in Criticism* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1957; rev. edn, 1967), p. i.

¹⁰ James L. Calderwood and Harold E. Toliver, ed., *Essays in Shakespeare Criticism* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1970), quoted in Pechter, p. 18.

Essays in these anthologies are selected on the basis of traditional humanist and/or formalist principles.

Although Rabkin's *Approaches to Shakespeare* was published in 1964, his anthology shows the editor's clear awareness of recent critical methodologies and schools of criticism; it presents a series of distinct approaches such as psychoanalytic, Marxist, and anthropological. 'Alone among the old anthologies', as Pechter comments, 'Rabkin's tries to engage with modern criticism in terms of its contradictions and differences'.¹¹ However, even for Rabkin, the issue of these contradictions and differences among critical approaches is not important; according to his own statement, the essays in his anthology do 'not present as much theoretical disagreement as their authors believe'.¹² Furthermore, he clearly shows his traditional humanist belief in Shakespeare's universality: even though 'the criticism of the twenty-first century will invent methods of which we have not yet dreamed, [. . .] again it will be discovered that Shakespeare preeminently has achieved what his critics are learning to perceive. This is in the nature of literary art [. . .]'¹³

None of these anthologies either discusses the notion of subjectivity or calls Shakespeare's universality into question. Anthologies in the 1980s, on the other hand, present the view that Shakespeare's universality is simply a myth. As Pechter notes, 1985 was a crucial year in that it saw the publication of three major materialist anthologies: Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman's *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, John Drakakis' *Alternative Shakespeares*, and Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield's *Political Shakespeare: Essays in Cultural Materialism*.¹⁴

¹¹ Pechter, p. 21.

¹² Rabkin, quoted in Pechter, p. 21.

¹³ Pechter, p. 22.

¹⁴ In the same year (1985) Catherine Belsey published her influential book *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London and New York: Routledge, 1985).

Interestingly, the anthologies by Parker and Hartman and by Drakakis were both published from Routledge (which has published a number of books particularly of postmodernist Shakespeare criticism since then). Parker, in her short introduction, assures us that one of the ‘central issues’ which the essays in the anthology ‘raise for debate’ is the ‘relations [of Shakespeare’s texts] with power, politics, gender, and history’.¹⁵ Drakakis informs his readers that the essays in his anthology present ‘a series of explorations of the ways in which *historically specific* readings are generated, and which acknowledge the *existence of structures within the text as devices for exclusion and repression*, while at the same time insisting that the process of “making sense” of a Shakespearean text is itself determined by a *multiplicity of forces*’. The aim of his anthology is a typical one in the 1980s: ‘the objective common to all of these essays is the demystification of the “myth” of Shakespeare’.¹⁶ The frequent reprinting of these anthologies not only reveals their popularity and influence but also discloses this stance of the academics and of the publishers.

Equally popular and influential as these anthologies has been Dollimore and Sinfield’s *Political Shakespeare*, whose introduction discusses ‘three aspects of historical and cultural process’ in which materialist criticism has great interest: consolidation, subversion, and containment. Dollimore concisely defines these terms as follows: ‘the first refers, typically, to the ideological means whereby a dominant order seeks to perpetuate itself, the second to the subversion of that order, the third to the containment of ostensibly subversive pressures’. In his introduction Dollimore claims that the essays in the anthology consider ‘the ideological dimension of consolidation’ — the ways in which a certain idea ‘*reinforces* particular class and

¹⁵ Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman, introduction to *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory* (London and New York: Routledge, 1985), p. xi.

¹⁶ John Drakakis, introduction to *Alternative Shakespeares* (London and New York: Routledge, 1985), pp. 23–4 (emphasis added).

gender interests by presenting the existing social order as natural and God-given (and therefore immutable)'. At the end of his introduction, Dollimore calls for 'the need to disclose the effectiveness and complexity of the ideological process of containment'.¹⁷

III. Bitter Battles: The Right vs the Left

As the publication of these materialist anthologies within the same year shows, these postmodernist and materialist approaches have come to represent 'powerful and viable' alternatives to the traditional criticism which had previously dominated Shakespeare scholarship in the previous century.¹⁸ It is not surprising, then, that this rapid ascendancy of the recent tendencies of Shakespeare criticism called forth a critical backlash.

One example is 'the public wrangle' between Richard Levin, 'a polemical defender of traditional approaches', and his 'radical opponents'.¹⁹ In 1988 *PMLA* published Levin's essay 'Feminist Thematics and Shakespearean Tragedy', in which he bitterly criticised some selected Shakespearean feminists. Feminist criticism, argued Levin, is too thematic:

These critics agree that the plays are not really about the particular characters who appear there but about some general idea and, consequently, that they are not primarily dramatizations of actions but explorations of or commentaries on or inquiries into or critiques of that idea, which the characters and action subserve. [. . .] it is clear that they all interpret the tragedies in terms of a theme. It is also clear that the themes employed in their interpretations are basically the same. Although the terminology may vary, these critics all find that the plays are about the role of gender in the individual and in society.²⁰

¹⁷ Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, ed., *Political Shakespeare: Essays in Cultural Materialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985; 2nd edn, 1994), pp. 10 and 15.

¹⁸ Kamps, introduction to *Shakespeare Left and Right*, p. 1.

¹⁹ Peter J. Smith, *Social Shakespeare: Aspects of Renaissance Dramaturgy and Contemporary Society* (London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's, 1995), p. 2.

²⁰ Richard Levin, 'Feminist Thematics and Shakespearean Tragedy', *PMLA* 103 (1988), 125–36 (p. 126).

Moreover, Levin claimed that ‘instead of selecting the facts to fit the theme’, feminist critics can ‘manipulate the theme to fit the facts’.²¹ This citation clearly reveals the difference between traditional humanism and recent materialism. For Levin, Shakespeare’s plays are ‘about the particular characters who appear’ in the text, or on the stage, whereas feminist criticism, Levin complained, only sees the plays as demonstrations of the ideologies of gender in society.

Levin’s essay caused a stir in Shakespeare studies, and its consequences may have surprised even Levin himself: in 1989 twenty-four scholars, some of whom were criticised in Levin’s essay, joined to sign a letter to the editor of *PMLA* in order to protest against Levin’s article. The next issue of *PMLA* published the letter in the ‘Forum’ section, in which the twenty-four feminist critics called Levin’s essay ‘a tired, muddled, unsophisticated essay that is blind at once to the assumptions of feminist criticism of Shakespeare and to its own’.²² The ‘Forum’ section also printed Levin’s reply. It ended as follows: ‘I have faith [. . .] that rational argument will eventually prevail, or I would not have written the article or this reply, and I even hope that one day some of the signers and I can enter into a real discussion of the issues I tried to raise’.²³

In 1990 Levin and his opponents shifted their battlefield to *New Literary History*. Levin published an essay ‘Unthinkable Thoughts in the New Historicizing of English Renaissance Drama’, followed by Catherine Belsey’s response, ‘Richard Levin and In-different Reading’. In her response, Belsey wrote that she considered Levin’s argument ‘particularly half-witted’, criticising Levin for preferring ‘to score easier points by inventing a much sillier statement and attributing it to me as a

²¹ Ibid., 130.

²² Janet Adelman, and others, ‘To the Editor’, *PMLA* 104 (1989), 77–8 (p. 78).

²³ Levin, ‘Reply’, *PMLA* 104 (1989), 78–9 (p. 79).

representative of the critical approach he deplores'.²⁴ To Jonathan Dollimore, Levin is of no interest whatsoever. Dollimore published an essay in the same issue of the journal with an interesting prefixed note: 'This essay was prompted by an invitation from Ralph Cohen, editor of *New Literary History*, to reply to a critique of new historicism and cultural materialism by Richard Levin, to be published in the same issue of that journal. Nothing in Levin's article inspired me to take up this generous offer'.²⁵

Ivo Kamps, who was at the time completing his doctorate on Renaissance history plays, conceived the idea of organising an MLA session on the academic battle between the traditional humanists and the materialists so as 'to facilitate in a public forum the continuation of a rather heated if not bitter exchange in *PMLA*'s Forum over the publication of Richard Levin's "Feminist Thematics and Shakespearean Tragedy"'. In December 1989, the MLA organised a special session in Washington D.C. on the role of ideology in Shakespeare studies under the title 'The Place of Ideology in the Criticism and Metacriticism of Shakespeare'. The session included presentations by Levin, Gayle Greene, Michael Bristol, and Victoria Kahn. These papers formed the basis for the anthology called *Shakespeare Left and Right*, which Kamps edited and published from (not surprisingly) Routledge in 1991. The MLA session did not produce any consensus between Levin and the new materialist Shakespeare critics. In the introduction to *Shakespeare Left and Right* (1991), Kamps confessed that the 'subsequent labo[u]rs' of the contributors to his anthology would not produce any consensus, either.²⁶

²⁴ Catherine Belsey, 'Richard Levin and In-different Reading', *New Literary History* 21 (1990), 449–56 (p. 455).

²⁵ Jonathan Dollimore, 'Shakespeare, Cultural Materialism, Feminism and Marxist Humanism', *New Literary History* 21 (1990), 461–93 (p. 471).

²⁶ Kamps, introduction to *Shakespeare Left and Right*, p. 2.

Levin was not alone in the condemnation of materialist criticism of Shakespeare. In 1990 another stir was caused after Terence Hawkes published a review of four recently published books in *London Review of Books*. He argued that '[t]he creature familiar to us as "Shakespeare" was a production of 'cultural meaning'. Hawkes questioned 'essentialism' in the traditional mode of Shakespeare (and literary in general) studies, a belief in, or concept of, 'the "real" and essential meanings of the text "itself", the heart of the "play that Shakespeare wrote", the standard from which other readings diverge'. In Hawkes's view, the intention of Shakespeare as the author is simply 'unreachable'. Shakespeare's plays are 'texts, and thus constituted not only by an author but also by the interpretative strategies of readers and the material political and social pressures of the historical contexts helping to shape those strategies'. This 'processing' prevents us from having 'immediate or objective access' to 'the "plays themselves" or to what they "really" mean'. Hawkes stressed the 'capacity' of Shakespearean texts 'to serve as instruments by which we make cultural meaning for ourselves'. Hawkes's argument can be best summarised in the following words: 'we can say of Shakespeare's plays what we can say of those other instruments by which we make meanings, the words of our language. They don't, in themselves, "mean". It is *we* who mean *by* them'.²⁷

In Hawkes's view, Shakespeare was a figure '[r]einformed and transmitted by the educational system'; on this ground, it is no wonder that Hawkes appreciated Gary Taylor's *Re-Inventing Shakespeare: A Cultural History from the Restoration to the Present* (1990) which considered the construction of the cultural status of the

²⁷ 'Bardbiz', review of *Rebuilding Shakespeare's Globe* by Andrew Gurr and John Orrell (1989), *Shakespeare and the Popular Voice* by Annabel Patterson (1989), *Re-Inventing Shakespeare: A Cultural History from the Restoration to the Present* by Gary Taylor (1990), and *Shakespeare's America, America's Shakespeare* by Michael Bristol (1990), *London Review of Books*, 22 February 1990, pp. 11–3.

dramatist since the Restoration and the role of academics in that enterprise. Hawkes recognised Taylor's work as 'a genuine contribution to our knowledge of how [. . .] culture works'. Hawkes recognised the Globe edition of Shakespeare's plays as a key aspect of Bardbiz. The edition appeared in 1864 and remained 'the ubiquitous standard text' for a century. It was edited by (in Hawkes's words) 'three Cambridge dons', W. G. Clark, J. Glover and W. A. Wright, and Hawkes regarded their work as 'the first serious entry into Bardbiz of professional academic "experts"'. Other academics contributed to Bardbiz, and they are, in Hawkes's words, 'the creators of the problem-racked Bard' we study now. By the end of the twentieth century, Shakespeare was 'firmly in the possession of research-minded professors and the staple of many of their careers' throughout the world. Major centres of Bardbiz have been established all over the world to offer 'en route a tough-guy run-down on the scholars and critics'.²⁸

Taylor for his part illustrated re-inventions of Shakespeare since the Restoration. Michael Bristol's *Shakespeare's America, America's Shakespeare* (1990) examined these cultural reinventions of the dramatist in the United States. It presented 'a trenchant materialist account' of the ways in which Shakespeare had been used within American culture. Hawkes praised Bristol's study because Bristol examined what American culture constructed by Shakespeare: 'the political economy of scholarship within the educational apparatus, the use of "tradition" as a social agency, and the employment of bibliographical and editing techniques in the "deuteronomic" reconstruction of an originating "authority"'. Shakespeare had become an American Institute, as symbolised by the Folger Shakespeare Library. It was founded by Henry Clay Folger, who, rejecting the suggestion that it should be housed in Stratford,

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 11–2.

insisted that it should be situated in close proximity to America's super power base: the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress and other governmental edifices in Washington D.C. America's great Shakespeariana at the heart of D.C. was a symbol of 'the centrality of Shakespeare to American culture'.²⁹ This symbolism was explicitly expressed in the speech by the first director of the Library William Slade at Folger's funeral: 'a line drawn from the site of the Folger Shakespeare Memorial through the Capitol building and extended onward will all but touch the monument to Washington and the memorial to Lincoln'.³⁰

'*We mean by Shakespeare*' was Hawkes's 'presentist' motto. In his view, Shakespeare's plays were mere instruments by which we make meaning, and Shakespeare was 'a writer of no necessary distinction, a former star, now reduced to the status of a "black hole"'. A furious campaign not only against Hawkes but also against cultural materialism in general was launched by James Wood, whose distaste for materialist criticism had grown from his undergraduate experience at Cambridge, and the debate continued in the pages of the *London Review of Books* for nearly one year. Wood wrote to the editor that Hawkes's review had presented a typical view of cultural materialism. He argued that it was 'standard' for cultural materialists to regard Shakespearean text (and any text) as 'merely the poor sponge that soaks up the various historical, ideological, and social discourses of the day' because they believe that '[t]he text has no original, intentional meaning'. Wood was obviously wrong; Hawkes did not deny the existence of 'original, intentional meaning' but insisted that it was unreachable and thus reduced Shakespeare's works to 'instruments' by which readers make meaning. Wood (wrongly) criticised cultural materialism for 'den[ying] Shakespeare the freedom to dissent, to struggle with history' and producing 'sinister'

²⁹ Ibid., p. 13.

³⁰ Quoted in Hawkes, 'Bardbiz', p. 13.

readings. He criticised cultural materialism for making Shakespeare ‘history’s hostage’.³¹

Alan Sinfield bitterly responded: Wood ‘doesn’t know what he’s talking about’ when he summarised the perspective of cultural materialism, and he ‘cannot read what Hawkes is saying’. Sinfield told Wood to pay attention to ‘how carefully’ Hawkes argued:³² his work ‘sets out to judge the degree to which the drama was or was not complicit with the powers of the state’.³³ Ironically, it was not only Wood but also Sinfield who ‘cannot read what Hawkes is saying’. Both Wood and Sinfield were discussing cultural materialism, while in the passage Sinfield cited Hawkes was actually referring to the practice of new historicism. Sinfield pointed out a couple of points where Wood confused American and British phenomena, but Sinfield himself mixed up two schools of criticism while Hawkes drew a line between them. Yet Sinfield was still right that cultural materialism (as we shall see shortly) does not regard Shakespeare’s plays as a ‘poor sponge that soaks up’ various discourses. Ania Loomba similarly argued that Wood’s criticism of cultural materialism represented a false accusation: he ‘berates precisely those critics [. . .] who show how Shakespeare’s plays *intervened* in history’.³⁴

Sinfield’s respond only provoked more hostility from Wood:

The text — the poor text — lies at ‘the intersection’ of [. . .] various discourses, and is in fact ‘the site’ on which these conflicting discourses have it out with each other. The text’s role in this is seen as entirely passive. Or as Alan Sinfield puts it, in a resonant and sinister phrase (from an essay by him in *Political Shakespeare*): ‘Shakespeare is one of the places where ideology is made’.

Cultural materialists, Wood continued, believe that discourse ‘inevitably display[s] its own contradictions and negations, even as it tries to efface those contradictions in the

³¹ James Wood, ‘Bardbiz’, letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 22 March 1990, p. 5.

³² Alan Sinfield, ‘Bardbiz’, letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 19 April 1990, p. 4.

³³ Quoted in Sinfield, ‘Bardbiz’, letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 19 April 1990, p. 4.

³⁴ Sinfield, ‘Bardbiz’, letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 19 April 1990, p. 4; Loomba, ‘Bardbiz’, letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 15 August 1991, p. 4.

process of legitimising itself' and that the texts are 'inevitably [. . .] "marked and fissured by the interplay of the discourses that constitute them"'.³⁵ Wood was obviously unaware that there was a difference between his view of cultural materialism 'Shakespeare is one of the places controlled by discourses (or ideology)' and Sinfield's 'Shakespeare is one of the places where ideology is made'. The former is a passive activity whereas the latter is an activist campaign responding to the force of discourses.

In order to support his false argument Wood cited a couple of contributors to *Political Shakespeare*, which Sinfield co-edited with Dollimore. Sinfield replied that he had not argued 'that *no* cultural materialists have presented Shakespeare as going along with the dominant ideology of his time', and repeated his emphasis that 'in cultural materialism it is *a question*'. Consequently, it is not surprising that Wood was able to quote passages that seem to support his contention. The problem of Wood's argument was over-generalisation of the theory and practice of cultural materialism. As Sinfield pointed out, Wood's 'intellectual tradition' did not 'require him to admit contrary evidence', whereby he 'carefully avoids acknowledging the extent' to which cultural materialism 'tends in other directions, or opens up intricate problems of agency, intervention, subversion'. John Drakakis, editor of the first volume of *Alternative Shakespeares*, similarly criticised Wood for his closed-mindedness: 'all that does not meet with Wood's approval is kneaded into an utterly unrecognisable dough before being relegated to the Avernus' of cultural materialism.³⁶

We must be aware of two issues regarding authorial intention. Firstly, we may not be able to recognise the author's intentions. That the author has intentions and that

³⁵ Wood, 'Bardbiz', letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 24 May 1990, p. 4.

³⁶ Sinfield, 'Bardbiz', letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 14 June 1990, p. 4 (Sinfield added that he believed that authors had intentions); Drakakis, 'Bardbiz', letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 14 June 1990, p. 4.

we can recognise them are two different points. Secondly, (as a result) meaning is not exclusively the product of the author's intentions but the product of two agents: the author and the reader. Wood could not see these perspectives. Drakakis understood them; he identified one of Wood's problems as the assumption that Shakespearean texts were *exclusively* the products of authorial intention.³⁷ In fact, Hawkes argued (as I have quoted already) that Shakespeare's plays were 'texts, and thus constituted not only by an author but also by the interpretative strategies of readers and the material political and social pressures of the historical contexts helping to shape those strategies'.³⁸

Wood's one other problem that Drakakis identified was his ignorance: his argument concerned the 'much vaunted politics of dissent, which is, in reality, just another version of an authoritarian metaphysics attempting to excuse its own combination of bad faith and ostentatious ignorance'. These three problems prevented Wood from acknowledging that 'originary [*sic*] moments of artistic creativity' are '*readings and mediations* of a whole range of social, cultural and literary pressures'.³⁹

Drakakis argued:

Shakespeare, like any other writer, may not have been fully conscious of what his texts were doing, nor is it reasonable for us to expect him to have been. It is a matter of fine critical and historical judgment, governed by a range of carefully formulated academic protocols, which are themselves constantly subject to verification and revaluation, as to what proportion of a Shakespearean text we may ascribe to authorial intention, and the solution lies somewhere other than in making of the author a ventriloquist's dummy.⁴⁰

Wood, as Drakakis complained, reduced cultural materialism to 'a meaningless derogatory slogan'.⁴¹

³⁷ Drakakis, 'Bardbiz', letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 14 June 1990, p. 4.

³⁸ Hawkes, 'Bardbiz', p. 12.

³⁹ Drakakis, 'Bardbiz', letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 14 June 1990, p. 4.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Wood, in return, called Drakakis's reply a 'hysterical onslaught', but ironically, Wood's own campaign against cultural materialism began to sound rather like a 'hysterical onslaught'. He was not happy to be considered "“ignorant” or possessed of “limited understanding”", and complained (again falsely) that no one was allowed to have opinions outside an academic authority. None of the academic contributors to this discussion either claimed or implied that 'only the university knows how to judge texts'. None of them denied that the author was 'a complex thing, both determined by history and controlling it, both intentional and the possession of language's semantic multiplicity'.⁴² Hawkes, Sinfield and Drakakis all claimed that meaning was not exclusively identical to the author's intention, and Sinfield and Drakakis believed that profound knowledge of the subject was essential for the debate. Wood continued to fail to see these points. He insisted that he still had 'the hot blood of the academy in [his] veins' two years after graduating from Cambridge — but surely, 'the hot blood of the academy' in Wood's veins was not enough.

'The complexity of the position' that Hawkes, Sinfield and Drakakis had 'laboured to place before Wood [. . .] escaped his notice', mourned Drakakis. He regarded Wood's 'hot blood of the academy' as 'a testimony to something more disturbing than his confused hot-headedness' and 'confirmation [. . .] of a hysteria that is uniquely [. . .] his own'. Wood's 'only substantive riposte to what he takes to be an objectionable *method* is to confirm his "amateur" status, a position that goes hand in hand with his insistence on the autonomy of the writer'. Drakakis was tired of Wood's continuous failure to listen to his opponents; he announced that he had 'no desire to castigate Wood for his ignorance' — though he was 'saddened by it' — as long as Wood kept it to himself.⁴³

⁴² Wood, 'Bardbiz', letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 16 August 1990, p. 5.

⁴³ Drakakis, 'Bardbiz', letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 11 October 1990, p. 4.

Wood argued that literature ‘challenges the thoughtful critic, the intelligent critic, to formulate a language of originality adequate to the text’.⁴⁴ His view of the text, as Drakakis pointed out, implied that since the text occupied the ‘original’ status, criticism was ‘a slave to the literary text’. Good critics, Drakakis insisted, are ‘something more than a mere purveyor of cliché’d opinions’ which they seek to make their own ‘by spurious claims to originality’, and that reading was ‘not a passive, submissive [. . .] activity’ but should offer ‘opportunities to resist even when what one is resisting is the language attributed to an “authority” such as Shakespeare’. Good criticism then inevitably requires certain knowledge, and that was exactly what Wood lacked. Drakakis recognised universities as institutions where that knowledge might be found — institutions that bear ‘little resemblance’ to Wood’s ‘peculiar imagination’.⁴⁵

Reading the debate between the materialist critics and Wood, John Caird of the Royal Shakespeare Company boldly suggested that the debaters should not write on Shakespeare’s texts but only criticise each other. His suggestion, as he admitted, arose from his failure to understand the debate and postmodernism, which clearly reinforces Drakakis’s emphasis on the necessity of certain knowledge and capability to follow and construct intellectual arguments.⁴⁶ In response to Caird’s irritation, Anthony Pratt answered that Caird’s ‘frustration’ was based on ‘a number of misconceptions’ about postmodernism. He argued that postmodernism ‘actually makes life a great deal easier’ because it liberated readers from ‘the burden of trying to work out how Shakespeare saw the world’, and that readers ‘can do whatever [they] like with the plays’. All they must do, wrote Pratt, was to show whether the plays ‘collude with’

⁴⁴ Wood, ‘Bardbiz’, letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 16 August 1990, p. 5.

⁴⁵ Drakakis, ‘Bardbiz’, letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 11 October 1990, p. 4.

⁴⁶ ‘Bardbiz’, letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 20 December 1990, p. 4.

power or 'resist' it. Pratt thus utterly rejected the author's intention and oversimplified the process of meaning making.⁴⁷

Pratt argued further that since we saw the world 'in terms of true or false discourses', Sinfield and Drakakis's accusation of Wood of ignorance was a postmodernist 'game' whose purpose was 'to create a symbolic enemy' (or the 'Other') in order to 'justify' their own 'militancy'.⁴⁸ Sinfield furiously replied: 'What was Anthony Pratt's bland and confused mockery for [. . .]?' For Sinfield (and most likely for Drakakis as well) the debate over cultural materialism and Bardbiz was not merely a 'game' of looking for an enemy to justify his own 'militancy' but sophisticated discussion of a kind that an intellectual paper would need. It was clear that Sinfield, just like Drakakis, was tired of some contributors' lack of knowledge: 'why do the same misconceptions keep churning on through, month after month?' he complained.⁴⁹ For this very reason, Sinfield by this point appears to have decided, as did Drakakis, not to respond to the hot-headed Wood's hostility towards cultural materialism.

Wood's furious campaign against materialist criticism continued to appear on the 'Letters' pages until September 1991.⁵⁰ Throughout the course of this Bardbiz debate, Wood openly disapproved of cultural materialism, which, in *his* view, saw the author as 'some kind of unproblematic monad'. He claimed that the author should be seen as 'a complex thing, both determined by history and controlling it, both

⁴⁷ 'Bardbiz', letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 7 February 1991, pp. 4–5.

⁴⁸ 'Bardbiz', letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, p. 5.

⁴⁹ 'Bardbiz', letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 7 March 1991, p. 5.

⁵⁰ Wood, 'Bardbiz', letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 25 April 1991, p. 4. At one point he called Sinfield 'arrogant rectitude [. . .] snug in his knowing study at Sussex'. Although Sinfield ignored it, one of his MA students stood up to dismiss Wood's false accusation and point out (once again) that his argument was based on his ignorance. She insisted on 'openness to the possibility of new questions becoming relevant' and to 'old questions still found important' by new schools of thought. It was Alan Sinfield, wrote the student, who taught her the importance of open-mindedness (Penny McCarthy, 'Bardbiz', letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 23 May 1991, p. 4).

intentional and unconscious, the originator of language and the possess[or] of language's semantic multiplicity'. Ironically, it means that Wood, as Loomba pointed out, would have to acknowledge and examine 'precisely those tensions, ambiguities, conflicts, histories and debates' that cultural materialism focuses on and Wood disapproves. Drakakis similarly argued that Wood was 'free to exercise a Thatcherite philistinism in seeking to marginalize' such 'intellectual activity' as cultural materialism, but 'in order to do so successfully' he would have either 'to proscribe certain forms of investigation' which he considered meaningless or 'to refute them through the mobilisation of superior intellectual arguments' which he did not possess.⁵¹

In Leonard Jackson's view, cultural materialism was not yet a firmly theorised school of criticism. The problem at the moment, wrote Jackson, was that cultural materialists had not presented a 'formal statement' of their theoretical agenda: 'what their theory is, what claims it makes and what claims it does not make'. Jackson pointed out that Sinfield and Dollimore, for example, defined cultural materialism in terms of its methodology rather than theory. Without such a key theoretical claim (or claims), argued Jackson, cultural materialism was worthless. Sinfield accepted that Jackson had a point but saw the situation differently; Sinfield did not see that the lack of theory would make cultural materialism worthless but considered it 'a central occupation' of cultural materialists 'to the point where cultural materialism could be characterised as an attempt to reason a way out of a base/superstructure model'. Cultural materialism, in Sinfield's view, was evolving.⁵²

⁵¹ Wood, 'Bardbiz', letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 16 August 1990, p. 5; Loomba, 'Bardbiz', letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 15 August 1991, p. 4; Drakakis, 'Bardbiz', letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 11 October 1990, p. 4.

⁵² Jackson, 'Bardbiz', letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 13 June 1991, p. 5; Sinfield, 'Bardbiz', letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 11 July 1991.

A much milder, yet equally complex, debate was launched by Graham Martin, who threw out a question why it was that ‘Shakespeare’s plays (not Jonson’s, Dekker’s, Greene’s, Massinger’s etc) command[ed] the attention of successive generations of interpreters’. He insisted that the answer lay in the existence of a certain *intrinsic* quality in Shakespeare’s plays and poems which makes them ‘such a peculiarly fertile site for the production of “meanings”’ as no other literary texts would do. Martin presented two perspectives regarding the intrinsic quality in Shakespearean texts. One was that Shakespeare’s plays were ‘so riven with ideological contradictions [. . .] that no unifying account can ever be proposed’. In other words, these contradictions make various readings of the same text possible. The other was that Shakespeare was ‘a dazzlingly accomplished writer in such a variety of styles that, as a direct result, his texts reveal with impressive clarity a feature more or less discernible in any past writing that continues to attract readers (or theatregoers)’ and ‘energetically resist interpreters in the same degree that they feed a passion for appropriating them’.⁵³ Martin, however, did not explain how the texts that ‘reveal with impressive clarity a feature’ and stimulate appropriation could ‘resist’ interpretation at the same time.

To Martin’s first perspective, Sinfield replied that it ‘seems dangerously close to being a description of what has been happening rather than an explanation of it’. Sinfield proposed another perspective: Shakespeare is ‘already where meaning is produced, and people therefore want to appropriate him’. Sinfield, therefore, called the dramatist a ‘cultural token’. This perspective, of course, introduces other questions: why was it Shakespeare that admirers began to appreciate, and how did that appreciation first start? For Wood it is not the status of the author as a ‘cultural token’

⁵³ Martin, ‘Bardbiz’, letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 28 June 1990, p. 4.

but ‘a *literary* mystery’ that a reader would favour one text over another. He identified its origin in the author’s particular selection of ‘certain words in a certain form and order’. Wood, in this sense, was a conservative formalist or new critic. As to Martin’s second view, Sinfield pointed out that it would be difficult to demonstrate it. Martin claimed that cultural materialism ‘rarely, if ever, discusse[d]’ value. Sinfield, on the other hand, argued that cultural materialism considered it ‘historically, culturally, determined’, and explained that this did not mean that there is no value but that it could ‘not be expected to work outside their customary context’. He pointed out that cultural materialists had been criticised for being ‘unusually straightforward about their values, instead of deploying the traditional critical strategy of mystifying them as natural or human or Shakespeare’s’.⁵⁴

Another issue raised during this debate over the modes of recent Shakespeare studies was the ethics of aesthetics. Reading the debate for several months, Boris Ford wondered when it was that Sinfield and Drakakis read Shakespeare for pleasure as they might listen to Bach or Mozart. Their readings of Shakespeare did not convey to Ford ‘the least impression that they enjoyed or are moved or restored by Shakespeare’ or ‘that they believe it is any part of their business as university teachers of literature to help their students enjoy and be moved by Shakespeare [. . .]’⁵⁵ Ford’s letter encouraged two further contributions. M. J. Devaney similarly questioned the status of literary studies: ‘what a sad state literary studies are in. [. . .] something must be seriously wrong with literary criticism and theory’ if critics ‘convey a sense that literature itself means nothing to them or that it means something to them only insofar

⁵⁴ Sinfield, ‘Bardbiz’, letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, p. 4; Wood, ‘Bardbiz’, letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 25 April 1991, p. 4. For some reason Sinfield, as if he had completely forgotten his reply to Martin, repeats the same ideas more or less in the same words in his letter published on 7 March 1991 (p. 5).

⁵⁵ ‘Bardbiz’, letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 12 July 1990, p. 4.

as it [. . .] help[s] them to publish books, get tenure and become famous'.⁵⁶ Drakakis believed that Ford was 'in great danger of configuring Art as an alternative to the National Health Service, in the hope [. . .] that the quasi-religious triumvirate (Shakespeare, Bach, Mozart)' was 'an adequate compensation for the practical deficiencies of the latter'. He acknowledged the 'engaging anti-intellectual eccentricity' of such a view as Ford's, but found it 'offensive in its obfuscating naivety'.⁵⁷

Another campaign against postmodernist approaches to literary texts was launched by Brian Vickers, director of the Centre for Renaissance Studies at ETH Zurich (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology). In *Appropriating Shakespeare: Contemporary Critical Quarrels* (1993), he spends over 500 pages contending against materialist criticism. After a section entitled 'Critical Theories' in which he (rather poorly) summarises the developments and key theories of structuralism and poststructuralism, Vickers presents a more important section 'Critical Practices' in which he challenges practices of recent Shakespeare criticism: deconstruction, new historicism, psychoanalysis (or, in Vickers' own words, 'psychocriticism'), feminism, and Marxism.

Vickers is discomforted by a recent critical tendency that 'Shakespeare's plays, for so long the primary focus of the critic's and scholar's attention, are now secondary, subordinated to the imperialism and self-advancement of the particular group'. For Vickers the current status of Shakespeare studies was regrettable because each of these critical approaches attempts to 'appropriate Shakespeare for its own ideology or critical theory'. Here Vickers uses the term 'appropriation' rather sarcastically: 'as Frank Lentricchia (in *After the New Criticism*) glosses the term, in

⁵⁶ 'Bardbiz', letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 30 August 1990, p. 4.

⁵⁷ 'Bardbiz', letter to the editor, *London Review of Books*, 11 October 1990, p. 4.

the work of Foucault and others “appropriation” means “the interested, self-aggrandizing, social possession of systems of discourse”. Furthermore, Vickers complains about the ‘division of the field of criticism into clearly-labelled competing groups, each with its preferred journals, founding methodology, terminology, and other codes of reference’. It is an undeniable fact, as Vickers rightly points out, that each critical school has ‘a specific ideology, a self-serving aim of proving the validity of their own approach by their readings of the text’. Borrowing a neo-Marxist term, Vickers provocatively calls this tendency ‘fetishisation of the label’.⁵⁸

Although he admits that ‘it was hard, in the late 1960s, not to be influenced by the critical upheaval emerging from Paris’ and that ‘like many others’ he bought and read Lévi-Strauss, Lacan and Foucault whenever they appeared, he declares a clear resistance to the French intellectual movement of that period and the recent trend in Shakespeare criticism.⁵⁹

As one recent commentator [Leonard Jackson] puts it, post-structuralism [. . .] is to be regarded as ‘a movement of protest against capitalism, science, Western metaphysics, patriarchy and of anything else that the theorists dislike’, rather than as a current of ideas producing ‘serious theories about literature or culture’ [. . .] While I accept that theoretical activity can be pursued independently of practical criticism, or detailed analyses of literary texts, that it need not always lead into these activities, I regard theory in the same terms as the sociologist W. G. Runciman, as a concept describing ‘a body of ideas . . . within which an explanatory hypothesis which is demonstrably in accordance with the evidence is itself provisionally explicable’. [. . .] Despite its claims to be an autonomous activity, literary theory — if it is to justify that title — must concern itself with the ‘evidence’, or ‘set of observations’ deriving from the study of literary texts — in this case Shakespeare’s plays.⁶⁰

I have cited this lengthy passage, not because I agree with Vickers’s views of postmodernism and of theory in general, but because we must not neglect his

⁵⁸ *Appropriating Shakespeare: Contemporary Critical Quarrels* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. x–xii.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xiii. Vickers’s citation of Jackson is from *The Poverty of Structuralism: Literature and Structuralist Theory* (1991), p. xi. His citation of Runciman is from *A Treatise on Social Theory, I: The Methodology of Social Theory* (1983), p. 150.

emphasis that literary theory ‘must concern itself with the “evidence”, or “set of observations” deriving from the study of literary texts’. As Vickers rightly claims, ‘Shakespeare critics have aligned themselves too easily with a number of attitudes deriving from the upheaval of received opinion brought about in Paris during the late 1960s’.⁶¹

The revised edition of *Shakespeare: A Bibliographical Guide* (1990) contains nine chapters that the first edition did not include when it was originally published in 1973.⁶² One of these chapters is Jonathan Dollimore’s essay added at the very end of the book: ‘Critical Developments: Cultural Materialism, Feminism and Gender Critique, and New Historicism’. At the beginning of the chapter Dollimore summarises the current movement of Shakespeare studies or, in his own words, ‘power struggles in the academy’:⁶³

Sometimes fairly, sometimes not, the new defines itself against the established. To that extent it might be said to depend upon what it seeks to displace. For its part, the established, through it does not want to be displaced, needs innovation if it is to survive in the long run; and because it has the greater power it tends to respond to this tension by allowing the new in a ‘policed’ form.⁶⁴

Kamps admitted in 1995 that despite the condemnations announced by such academics as Levin and Vickers over the last two decades materialist criticism had permanently changed the way Shakespeare was read, and that it seemed ‘most unlikely that Shakespeare studies [could] ever return to the comfortable piety of their idealist past’.⁶⁵ It is true, as Dollimore claims, that ‘behind every substantial literary-critical disagreement can be found a substantial cultural and political difference rooted

⁶¹ Vickers, pp. xii–xiii.

⁶² *Shakespeare: A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. by Stanley Wells (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973; new edn, 1990).

⁶³ Dollimore, ‘Critical Developments: Cultural Materialism, Feminism and Gender Critique, and New Historicism’, in *Shakespeare: A Bibliographical Guide*, p. 405.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 405.

⁶⁵ Kamps, introduction to *Materialist Shakespeare*, p. 17.

in the society of its time'. It is this cultural difference specific to the historical moment that makes 'the new self-reflective aspect of literary studies a contribution to cultural history'.⁶⁶

The revival of biographical studies can be seen, in part, as a counter-movement against recent scholarship in literary and theatre studies. Among its manifestations, Holden's biography is a good example. He claims in his prologue: 'the long-suffering son of Stratford is meanwhile being picked apart by historicists, feminists, Marxists, new historicists, post-feminists, deconstructionists, anti-deconstructionists, post modernists, cultural imperialists and post-colonialists. Perhaps it is time someone tried to put him back together again'.⁶⁷

This anti-theorism with a longing for the humanist Shakespeare of Romantic writers and A. C. Bradley is the precise reason that Holden dedicated his biography to his 'friend and mentor', Sir Frank Kermode,⁶⁸ who openly disclosed his hostility to the recent modes of Shakespeare studies in his *Shakespeare's Language* (2000). In return, Kermode dedicated the book to Holden (as well as Ursula Owen). Kermode, though he contends that he is 'not afraid of literary theory',⁶⁹ nevertheless admits that '[t]here are modern attitudes to Shakespeare I particularly dislike':

The worst of them maintains that the reputation of Shakespeare is fraudulent, the result of an eighteenth-century nationalist or imperialist plot. A related notion, almost equally presumptuous, is that to make sense of Shakespeare we need first to see the plays as involved in the political discourse of his day to a degree that has only now become intelligible. These and other ways of taking Shakespeare down a peg seem, when you examine them, to be interesting only as evidence of a recurring need to find something different to say, and to say it on topics that happen to interest the writer more than Shakespeare's words, which are, as I say, only rarely invoked. [. . .] I shall not pay much attention to what are [. . .] the prevailing modes of Shakespeare criticism.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Dollimore, 'Critical Developments', p. 406.

⁶⁷ Holden, *William Shakespeare: His Life and Work*, (London: Little, Brown, 1999), p. 1.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 6.

⁶⁹ Kermode and Christopher Norris, in conversation with Michael Payne, at the conference 'life.after.theory' (Loughborough University, 20 April 2002).

⁷⁰ Kermode, *Shakespeare's Language* (London: Penguin, 2000), pp. viii–ix.

Such a verbal parallel as ‘cultural imperialism’ (Holden) and ‘imperialist plot’ (Kermode), and their similar, negative, attitudes towards current Shakespeare studies not only reveal their close association — ‘such fun did Frank and I have while simultaneously writing about our mutually beloved Bard [. . .] that it is as much a pleasure as a privilege to have wrung from him his leave for the dedication,’⁷¹ — but also disclose their desire to save (from their point of view) the dramatist from the current modes of Shakespeare studies.

IV. Biography, New Historicism and Cultural Materialism

The recent interest in Shakespeare’s life is not simply a counter-movement against the theorisation of Shakespeare. It is also a mixture of interdisciplinary studies introduced by new historicism and cultural materialism, the discursive influence of popular culture in the late twentieth century, and the ‘market for a range of cultural goods that carry the Shakespeare trademark’.⁷² New historicism and cultural materialism have drawn our attention to new modes of studying literary texts in history, society, and politics; they have provided us with new opportunities to cross boundaries separating disciplines such as literature, art, history, politics, economics, sociology, and anthropology among others.

As Dollimore rightly notes in his ‘Critical Developments’, the influence of postmodernism is clear in recent Shakespeare studies. As we have seen, books and essays published in the 1980s and 1990s have tended to focus upon ideologies which controlled and oppressed Shakespeare’s subjectivity and his intellectual domain. In his introduction to *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (1980) —

⁷¹ Holden, *William Shakespeare*, p. 6.

⁷² Michael D. Bristol, *Big-time Shakespeare* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 5.

the monumental work to which the editors of all three of the anthologies published in 1985 refer — Stephen Greenblatt claims that the early modern period encountered ‘a change in the intellectual, social, psychological, and aesthetic structures that govern the generation of identities’. ‘The simplest observation’ of this phenomenon is that in the sixteenth century ‘there appears to be an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process’. Greenblatt argues that this ‘fashioning’ may suggest ‘the achievement of a less tangible shape: a distinctive personality, a characteristic address to the world, a consistent mode of perceiving and behaving.’⁷³ Fashioning, he goes on to declare, ‘fashions without regard for a sharp distinction between literature and social life’. It ‘invariably crosses the boundaries between the creation of literary characters, the shaping of one’s own identity, the experience of being mo[u]lded by *forces outside one’s control*, the attempt to fashion other selves’.⁷⁴ Formulation of identity is, as Greenblatt cites from Clifford Geertz’s *The Interpretation of Cultures*, forcefully operated under ‘a set of control mechanisms’ of the society in which one is located.⁷⁵ In effect, self-fashioning is ‘the Renaissance version of these control mechanisms, the cultural system of meanings that creates specific individuals by governing the passage from abstract potential to concrete historical embodiment’.⁷⁶ Self-fashioning, therefore, is a ‘*culture-specific* construction’.⁷⁷

Greenblatt suggests that we ought to study the formation of subjectivity in relation to ‘power’ and presents ‘a set of governing conditions common to most

⁷³ Ibid., p. 2.

⁷⁴ *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 1–3.

⁷⁵ Cited in Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, p. 3.

⁷⁶ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, pp. 3–4.

⁷⁷ Louis Adrian Montrose, book review of *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, *Criticism* 23 (1981), 349–59 (p. 355).

instances of self-fashioning'.⁷⁸ Here I would like to cite those conditions which are especially relevant to our analysis of the development of recent Shakespeare studies:

Self-fashioning [. . .] involves *submission to an absolute power or authority* situated at least partially outside the self — God, a sacred book, an institution such as church, court, colonial or military administration. [. . .] Self-fashioning is achieved in relation to something perceived as alien, strange, or hostile. This threatening Other — heretic, savage, witch, adulteress, traitor, Antichrist — must be discovered or invented *in order to be attacked and destroyed*.⁷⁹

Greenblatt concludes the introduction by presenting what Louis Adrian Montrose sees as 'a paradigm of sixteenth-century self-fashioning that is fit for an iron age':⁸⁰

we may say that self-fashioning occurs at the point of encounter between an authority and an alien, that what is produced in this encounter partakes of both the authority and the alien that is marked for attack, and hence that any achieved identity always contains within itself the signs of its own subversion or loss.⁸¹

Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, therefore, presents 'a darker vision of the Renaissance' — 'a vision of repression and "regenerative violence", of xenophobia and exploitation, of subversion and persecution'.⁸²

Greenblatt attempts to examine, that is to say, the fashioning of identity in both literary characters and their authors. For Greenblatt, there is no sharp distinction between the ontogeny of literary texts and that of authors; as already quoted, there exists no sharp distinction 'between literature and social life'.⁸³ Greenblatt suggests that the process of self-fashioning is inseparable from the process of writing a text; the author is fashioned by what he or she fashions. Yet, as Montrose points out, Greenblatt's shifts of analysis from the fashioning of characters to the fashioning of their authors and vice-versa seem to be accomplished too easily. Montrose, though he

⁷⁸ Greenblatt, pp. 8–9.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 9.

⁸⁰ Montrose, book review, 349.

⁸¹ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, p. 9.

⁸² Montrose, book review, 350.

⁸³ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, p. 3.

is considered a new historicist himself, challenges Greenblatt, and his perspective is worth quoting:

Although it may sometimes be difficult or impossible in practice, in theory we should distinguish and interrelate four processes: an author's self-fashioning in action; an author's self-fashioning in writing; an author's fashioning of a character (whether it be a lyric persona or a narrative character; the hero of a drama or merely an attendant lord); and the author's fashioning of the text itself, within which 'character' — and every particular character — is constituted as a textual effect.⁸⁴

As commentators have noted (rightly or wrongly), there are important differences or *disagreements* within and among materialist criticism on 'the precise nature of the subject/structure relationship, especially with regard to the subject's (in)ability to impact or subvert the social structure'⁸⁵ — disagreement 'between those who emphasise the process of consolidation and those who discover resistances to it'.⁸⁶ The disagreement, as Dollimore carefully observes, 'tends to be at distinct but overlapping levels: actual historical process and its discursive representation in literature'.⁸⁷

This divergence can be perceived in Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* itself. In its epilogue Greenblatt tells his readers that he began writing his book with an intention 'to explore the ways in which major writers of the sixteenth century created their own performances, to analyze the choices they made in representing themselves and in fashioning characters, to understand the role of human autonomy in the construction of identity'.⁸⁸ However, he confesses that as his work progressed:

I perceived that fashioning oneself and being fashioned by cultural institutions — family, religion, state — were inseparably intertwined. In all my texts and documents, there were [. . .] no moments of pure, unfettered subjectivity; indeed, the human subject itself began to seem remarkably unfree, the *ideological product* of the relations of power in a particular society. Whenever I focused sharply upon a moment of apparently autonomous self-fashioning, I found not an epiphany of identity freely chosen

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 355.

⁸⁵ Kamps, introduction to *Materialist Shakespeare*, p. 7.

⁸⁶ Dollimore, introduction to *Political Shakespeare*, p. 11.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 11.

⁸⁸ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, p. 256.

but a cultural artefact. If there remained traces of free choice, the choice was among possibilities whose range was strictly delineated by the social and ideological system in force.⁸⁹

He ends his epilogue in a pessimistic mood: ‘as for myself, [. . .] I want to bear witness at the close of my overwhelming need to sustain the *illusion* that I am the principal maker of my own identity’.⁹⁰ This is one of the central assumptions of new historicism: identities are ideological products in the power system of a certain society; they are fictions or (to use Greenblatt’s own words) ‘illusions’ formulated by the ideological system of socio-political forces.

How are identities formed? What is important for Greenblatt is the notion of ‘negotiation’ — the term he repeatedly uses in his later works — between the subject and cultural discourses. In 1989 — nine years after the publication of *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* — he proclaimed:

the work of art is the product of *negotiation* between a creator or class of creators, equipped with a complex, communally shared repertoire of conversions, and the institutions and practices of society. In order to achieve the *negotiation*, artists need to create a *currency that is valid for a meaningful, mutually profitable exchange*. It is important to emphasize that the process involves not simply appropriation but *exchange*, since the existence of art always implies a return, a return normally measured in pleasure and interest. [. . .] I am using the term ‘currency’ metaphorically to designate the systematic adjustments, symbolizations and lines of credit necessary to enable an exchange to take place. The terms ‘currency’ and ‘negotiation’ are the signs of our *manipulation and adjustment of the relative system*.⁹¹

Therefore, Greenblatt proposes that literary criticism should explore ‘the hidden places of negotiation and exchange’.⁹² In the next year (1990) he published *Learning to Curse*, an anthology of his own previously published essays. In its introduction he similarly insists upon the importance of negotiation:

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 256 (emphasis added).

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 257.

⁹¹ Greenblatt, ‘Towards a Poetics of Culture’ in *The New Historicism*, ed. by H. Aram Veeser (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 12 (emphasis added).

⁹² Ibid., p. 13.

self-expression is always and inescapably the expression of something else, something different. A recognition and an understanding of the difference does not negate self-expression — I have been unpersuaded by arguments that the self has been radically deconstructed — but it does help one [to] see more clearly where in the world one's identity comes from and what kind of *negotiation* and conflict it entails.⁹³

Greenblatt asserts that subjectivity is a product achieved through negotiation and exchange with socio-political discourses.

Greenblatt and other new historicists commonly assume that identities are formulated in response to ideological forces in the historical period. To what degree can the subject *actively* participate in this negotiation? To what degree, if any, is the subject (in)capable of impacting on or subverting the social structure? Greenblatt discusses *possibilities* of subversion in Renaissance society in his famous and influential essay 'Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and Its Subversion':⁹⁴ 'My interest [. . .] is in a prior form of restraint — in the process whereby subversive insights are generated in the midst of apparently orthodox texts and simultaneously contained by those texts, containing so efficiently that the society's licensing and policing apparatus is not directly engaged'.⁹⁵ For Greenblatt, resistance or 'subversion' is possible, but it is always controlled or 'contained' by society's ability to regulate deviations.

Moreover, power relies upon subversion itself in order to reinforce its construction of regularity in society. For Greenblatt Renaissance society was regulated by a mode of power 'which, in all instances where power is threatened with

⁹³ Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990; repr. 1992), p. 8.

⁹⁴ There is no doubt that the essay, as John Brannigan comments, is probably 'the most famous and widely anthologized new historicist essay' (p. 63). It is included in both Dollimore and Sinfield's *Political Shakespeare* (1985; 2nd edn 1994) and Richard Wilson and Richard Dutton's *New Historicism and Renaissance Drama* (1992). Interestingly, however, the three other major anthologies on new historicism — H. Aram Veese's *The New Historicism* (1989) and *The New Historicism: Reader* (1994) and Kiernan Ryan's *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism: A Reader* (1996) — do not include this essay. Veese's anthologies are both published from Routledge.

⁹⁵ Greenblatt, 'Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and Its Subversion', *Glyph* 8 (1981), 40–61 (p. 41).

subversion, recycles and produces itself continually'. There is, as John Brannigan points out, 'a comfortable circulation' in Greenblatt's power system that power produces the subversion which it then contains'. In this sense, power can define itself in relation only to subversion, 'to what is alien or other, and at the heart of power is therefore the production and subsequent containment of subversion'.⁹⁶ New historicism is a *structuralist* approach to the study of the Renaissance (or any period); its premise presupposes certain deep-seated patterns of *structures* constructed by the network of ideological forces which is capable of total control over the formation of identities and societies.

Greenblatt admits that his theory — which he calls 'poetics of culture' in his *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, the label to which he has frequently returned — was influenced by the French thinker, Michel Foucault: 'Certainly, the presence of Michel Foucault on the Berkeley campus for extended visits during the last five or six years of his life [. . .] has helped to shape my own literary critical practice'.⁹⁷ While new historicists continue referring to Foucault's early concept of power, sociologists have recently shown great interest in 'Foucault's propensity to change his mind'.⁹⁸ James Clifford, for example, comments:

[Foucault's] well-known stylistic excess, his confusing redefinitions, abandonment of positions, and transgressions of his own methodological rules may well be aspects of an ironic program designed to frustrate any coherent formation, and thus ideological confiscation of his writing. Foucault's work will not occupy any permanent ground, but must attack, pervert and transgress the grounds of truth and meaning wherever they become formulated institutionally.⁹⁹

Mark Poster notes that Foucault 'seems to take a perverse pleasure in shifting his stance' and complains that, because 'things seem to shift in the course of the writing

⁹⁶ John Brannigan, *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism* (London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's, 1998), pp. 64–5.

⁹⁷ Stephen Greenblatt, 'Towards a Poetics of Culture', p. 1.

⁹⁸ Clare O'Farrell, *Foucault: Historian or Philosopher?* (London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 44.

⁹⁹ 'Review of *Orientalism* by Edward Said', *History and Theory* 19 (1980), 204–23 (p. 213).

[. . .] by the end we seem to be reading about something else'.¹⁰⁰ 'Why change?' Maurice Clavel once asked Foucault. 'Just to change!' replied Foucault. 'From everything to everything?' Clavel mocked him. 'From everything to nothing', Foucault answered. Clavel added, 'I then called him jokingly a dandy, a dilettante of Nothingness'.¹⁰¹

In fact, why did Foucault never cease changing? 'The frequency of the changes in Foucault's work', as Clare O'Farrell rightly comments, 'reflect not only the rapidity with which he could see the limitations of what he had already proposed, but a certain, and on occasions perhaps excessive, attention to what others were saying about his work, and the vagaries of French intellectual fashion'.¹⁰² Many introductory books on Foucault organise their chapters and sections in terms of themes or subjects which Foucault dealt with, and this is one way to study his work.

However, an overview of Foucault's notion of power by following the chronological shift in his work reveals that the new historicist schemes of power are based upon the *early* Foucauldian concept. In the 1960s Foucault's leading concern was the limits of society created by the force of discourse. Foucault emphasised the idea that 'each society, at any given period, practices certain exclusions, or posits certain limits which invite transgression, thereby creating a "system of the transgressive"'.¹⁰³ In 1966 he said to Raymond Bellour, 'My object is not language but the archive, that is, *the accumulated existence by discourse*'.¹⁰⁴ In 1968 he noted that he was 'haunted by the existence of discourses'.¹⁰⁵ During this period, Foucault seems to have been influenced by Marxism. Marxism characterises power within what

¹⁰⁰ Mark Poster, quoted in O'Farrell, p. 44.

¹⁰¹ This story is cited in O'Farrell, p. 45.

¹⁰² O'Farrell, p. 45.

¹⁰³ O'Farrell, p. 67.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in O'Farrell, p. 93 (emphasis added).

¹⁰⁵ Foucault, quoted in O'Farrell, p. 93.

Foucault later termed the ‘repressive hypothesis’, which sees power as simply a negative infringement of someone else’s rights; here power is taken or seized from others, and it is viewed as something which one can possess or hold at another’s expense’.¹⁰⁶

By the time he gave a lecture entitled ‘The Order of Discourse’ in 1970, he had abandoned ‘the vision of a systematic description of the discursive “artifacts”, which emphasised order in society. In the 1970s the notions of ‘power’ occupied an important part in Foucault’s work. As O’Farrell suggests, it appears that ‘Foucault did not find a vision of the world in which the Same and the Other were totally coextensive a particularly easy one to think through’. In his work during this period, he painted ‘a picture of a world totally determined down to its finest particles by the inescapable workings of an anonymous and insubstantial “power”’.¹⁰⁷

Here we ought to consider what Foucault means by ‘power’. His earliest and probably most famous (and vague) definition of power appeared in 1972: ‘that thing which is so enigmatic, both visible and invisible, present and hidden, invested everywhere, which is called power’.¹⁰⁸ ‘Power’ Foucault added in 1976, ‘is not an institution and it is not a structure, it is not a certain strength with which some are endowed; it is the name that is lent to a complex strategic situation in a given society’.¹⁰⁹ For Foucault, power is not something that can be possessed. Power is a *relation*: ‘In reality, power means relations, a more-or-less organized, hierarchical, coordinated cluster of relations’.¹¹⁰ Foucault is concerned with the ways in which

¹⁰⁶ Sara Mills, *Discourse*, New Critical Idiom Series (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 37.

¹⁰⁷ O’Farrell, p. 93.

¹⁰⁸ Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, quoted in O’Farrell, p. 102.

¹⁰⁹ Foucault, *La Volonté de savoir* (1976), published under the title *The History of Sexuality*, trans. by Robert Hurley (New York: Penguin, 1978; London: Penguin, 1979), I: *An Introduction*; repr. as *The Will to Knowledge* (London; New York: Penguin, 1998), quoted in O’Farrell, p. 107.

¹¹⁰ Foucault, ‘The Confession of the Flesh’, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. by Colin Gordon (London: Harvester, 1981), p. 198.

people negotiate relations, rather than assuming an institutionalised relation in which an individual or group is all-powerful.

The precise nature and process of negotiation, and the subject's (in)capability of resistance to consolidation, are often debated. Although Richard Wilson regards new historicism and cultural materialism as 'the American and British wings' of materialist criticism, they have different views of the subject's relation to power.¹¹¹ The differences in assumptions about power further create differences of methodology.

New historicism, as I have indicated, regards power as a self-regulating system. Power, even when threatened by subversion, regulates the subversion and reassumes power. New historicists, therefore, analyse the means by which power achieves its aims. This practice of new historicism has been challenged. Brannigan poses a warning: 'by reducing our knowledge of the past to speculation on the designs and operation of power discernible in texts of all kinds, and by treating all texts as equally susceptible to ideological manoeuvres, history might just as well be called conspiracy'.¹¹² Furthermore, it is true, as Dollimore warns, that 'if we talk only of power producing the discourse of subversion we not only hypostatise power but also efface the cultural differences — and context — which the very process of containment presupposes. Resistance to that process may be there from the outset or itself produced by it'.¹¹³ Lee Patterson complains that new historicism 'typically focuses its attention not on the subversive and suppressed elements of society but on the dominating structures — and largely without criticism: the court, the aristocracy,

¹¹¹ Richard Wilson and Richard Dutton, eds, *New Historicism and Renaissance Drama* (London and New York: Longman, 1992), p. xi.

¹¹² Brannigan, p. 76.

¹¹³ Dollimore, introduction to *Political Shakespeare*, p. 12.

the upwardly mobile'.¹¹⁴ New historicism, Patterson contends, silences the resistance and dissidence of those in a subordinate position. This is the precise point that feminists call into question, and there is no doubt that this is one of new historicism's weaknesses.

Cultural materialism, on the other hand, focuses upon subversion; cultural materialists look for and examine the condition of 'instability' in the power relationship which 'can be its undoing'.¹¹⁵ Cultural materialism is interested not only in cultural ideologies that control subjects but also in tensions and conflicts which allow subversive or dissident perspectives to be articulated. For cultural materialism, therefore, *dissidence* is a considerably important aspect of the power relationship in a society. Dissidence is *within* the structures of power and is produced by *internal* conflicts within these structures. In his *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (1992), Sinfield quotes from Anthony Giddens: 'power relations are always two-way; that is to say, however subordinate an actor may be in a social relationship, the very fact of involvement in that relationship gives him or her a certain amount of power over the other'.¹¹⁶ For Sinfield, 'dissidence operates, necessarily, with reference to dominant structures. It has to invoke those structures to oppose them, and therefore can always, ipso facto, be discovered reinscribing that which it proposes to critique'.¹¹⁷

Sinfield declares that 'the inter-involvement of resistance and control is systematic'; 'any position supposes its intrinsic *op-position*'. According to Sinfield's

¹¹⁴ Lee Patterson, 'Historical Criticism and the Claims of Humanism' in *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), pp. 62–74; repr. in *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism: A Reader*, ed. by Kiernan Ryan (London and New York: Arnold, 1996), pp. 92–102 (p. 98).

¹¹⁵ Dollimore and Sinfield, p. 14.

¹¹⁶ Quoted in Sinfield, *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), p. 47.

¹¹⁷ Sinfield, *Faultlines*, p. 47.

scheme of power, 'dissident potential derives [. . .] from conflict and contradiction that the social order inevitably produces *within itself*, even as it attempts to sustain itself'.¹¹⁸ According to the new historicist scheme of power, to the contrary, power operates as 'a flawless, perfectly efficient and effective machine'.¹¹⁹ Cultural materialism disputes the new historicist scheme of power; for cultural materialists, the operations of power necessarily involve conflicts and contradictions which Sinfield calls 'faultlines' — conflicts and contradictions within power which articulate dissident perspectives.

Resistance or dissidence, therefore, is equally important for cultural materialism. Although both new historicism and cultural materialism analyse the functions of power and representations of power in texts, the difference between the two criticisms is clear: whereas new historicists typically focus upon the ways in which power contains subversion, cultural materialism examines ways in which dissidence or resistance to subordination is articulated and subversion can take place. New historicism investigates 'the very means by which power achieves its aims', while cultural materialism scrutinises 'instability which can be its undoing'.¹²⁰

Although both new historicism and cultural materialism aim to examine the literary text in a socio-political and cultural matrix, cultural materialism is more concerned with the *diachronic* relationship between the text and a certain cultural context. New historicism has greater interest in the *synchronic* aspects of such a relationship. New historicism, that is to say, explores the interaction and exchange between the literary text and other cultural discourses in the *same* historical period. It examines 'dialogue' between contemporary texts from many different genres and

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 47.

¹¹⁹ Brannigan, p. 111.

¹²⁰ Dollimore and Sinfield, p. 14.

discourses.¹²¹ New historicism thus brings biographers' attention to the cultural construction of the author's identity in Shakespeare's time, and religion is considered part of the discursive system of Renaissance England. As we shall see in chapter 2, when new historicism brought biographers' attention to the historiography of the English Reformation in the 1980s and 1990s, it was 'revisionism' (which emphasised the continuity of pre-Reformation Catholicism in early modern England by means of recusancy) that was beginning to dominate the field as the orthodoxy.

New historicism encourages contextual studies. David Ellis declares that 'it is especially difficult when you have been dead almost 400 years and have left no personal document; when the very few things said about you by your friends or acquaintances are too vague to be useful; and when there is no accurate chronological record of your movements and activities, let alone of your thoughts and feelings'.¹²² A similar view was expressed two centuries ago by Samuel Johnson. He proclaimed that 'nobody can write the life of a man but those who have eat[en] and drunk and lived in social intercourse with him'.¹²³

Ellis emphasises 'how little documentary evidence relating to Shakespeare had survived'. 'So little' do we know about 'England's greatest writer' that he believes that this problem is 'insuperable' for a biographer. He insists that we should not write any more biographies of Shakespeare for 'it is impossible to write a life of Shakespeare in what has now become the traditional manner', and 'anyone who reviewed the available information impartially would have to come to that

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 12.

¹²² 'Biography and Shakespeare: An Outsider's View', *The Cambridge Quarterly* 29 (2002), 296–313 (p. 296).

¹²³ Quoted in Barbara K. Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p. x.

conclusion'. For him, a series of new biographies only presents 'a misdirection of human resources, a waste of intellectual effort'.¹²⁴

What Ellis means by 'the traditional manner' is problematic. 'Is there a distinctively English tradition of literary biography?' asks Geoffrey Wall, in his introduction to the special edition of *The Cambridge Quarterly* in which Ellis's essay appears.¹²⁵ For Ellis, the answer is yes; it is an account based upon the 'accurate chronological record of' the figure's 'movements and activities'.¹²⁶ On the basis of this assumption Ellis claims that in Shakespeare's case there are 'very few items of evidence which matter, and most of those have been around for a long time'.¹²⁷ Whether or not any evidence 'matter[s]' can be subjected to *re*interpretations; it depends upon the critical process of the biographer's intellectual analysis, and this is, in part, the product of his or her relationship with the wider intellectual and cultural matrix. As early as 1936 A. A. Goldenweise wrote:

The historian is necessarily a selector of events. His interpretation, moreover, is not separable from the selection, rather does the former determine the latter, at least in part. When the historians tell us that they merely record, that 'the facts speak for themselves', they simply delude themselves. The facts, of course, do not speak: the historian speaks for them or makes them speak, and what they say depends upon the magic of his wand.¹²⁸

Goldenweise's argument can be applied to biographical studies. In chapters 3–5 I re-examine the evidence used by certain biographers in order to Catholicise Shakespeare and his parents, and evaluate the biographers' interpretation of the evidence.

Ellis believes that 'it is surely time to come clean and tell' publishers that a 'life' of Shakespeare, 'in their own modern understanding of this word', is not possible. As Katherine Duncan-Jones replies, publishers and readers have lately

¹²⁴ 'Biography and Shakespeare: An Outsider's View', 296.

¹²⁵ Introduction to *The Cambridge Quarterly* 29 (2002), 293–95 (p. 293).

¹²⁶ 'Biography and Shakespeare: An Outsider's View', 313.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 296.

¹²⁸ Quoted in Harry Elmer Barnes, *A History of Historical Writing* (1937; 2nd edn, New York: Dover, 1963), pp. 268–9.

become accustomed to ‘6–800 page biographical doorstep[s]’, ‘chronicling the doings, sayings and writings’ of authors, and a biography of the same kind cannot be constructed for Shakespeare. It is important to accept that ‘we don’t have enough data about Shakespeare to do it’, as Duncan-Jones admits, ‘and in some ways it’s a mercy’. It does not mean, however, that it is impossible to write about Shakespeare ‘from a biographical viewpoint’.¹²⁹ One of the chief differences between Ellis and Duncan-Jones lies in their attitudes towards the writing of biographies. As Fred Parker notes, ‘whatever the nature of the sources, a biographer will always be faced with gaps in the evidence, anecdotal material to be accepted or rejected, opportunities for imaginative inference and for judgement of probabilities’.¹³⁰ Ellis believes that ‘the challenge facing would-be biographers of Shakespeare is so overwhelming that the attempt should not be made’, whereas Duncan-Jones does not agree.¹³¹

While it is admitted that we cannot produce the ‘6–800 page biographical doorstep’ for Shakespeare, *contextual* studies of early modern England have become an essential part of biographical studies, and this phenomenon, as we have seen, owes much to new historicism. Although Ellis admits that ‘much more is known about the immediate social context of Shakespeare’s life than in Stevens’s time’, he concludes that ‘whether this means that we know a lot more about Shakespeare himself is doubtful’.¹³² Although there is, as Ellis points out, ‘a limit to how far social history can take you’, it is a way of understanding what Shakespeare might have been like and how he could have lived, if not exactly ‘what he was like’.¹³³

¹²⁹ Katherine Duncan-Jones with David Ellis, ‘Now you see him, now . . .’, *Around the Globe* 20 (Winter 2001), 27–30 (p. 27).

¹³⁰ ‘Johnson and the Lives of Poets’, *The Cambridge Quarterly* 29 (2000), 323–37 (p. 327).

¹³¹ ‘Now you see him, now . . .’, 30.

¹³² ‘Biography and Shakespeare: An Outsider’s View’, 298.

¹³³ ‘Now you see him, now . . .’, 29.

I am not arguing that contextual studies can replace biographical studies. But to write a biography with different kinds of evidence, we need to use a different type of methodology. This is the point that Ellis cannot see. The issue is not just that we cannot simply adapt Ellis's method in order to write a life of Shakespeare, but that it is inappropriate to do so and thus that it is pointless to argue whether or not it is possible. I agree with Duncan-Jones that 'for the foreseeable future scholars will undoubtedly continue to undertake biographical and contextual study, and this, too, is something extremely positive'. As I have argued in this chapter, the self is constructed in a complex matrix of cultural discourses. If so, 'passionate interest not just in Shakespeare's writings, but in the social, material and architectural environment within which he lived, and in which his plays were performed' is essential for an understanding of the author.¹³⁴

While new historicists have greater interest in the *synchronic* aspects of texts, cultural materialists are committed to *diachronic* understanding of texts. Dollimore and Sinfield argue in the foreword to their anthology:

A play by Shakespeare is related to the contexts of its production — to the economic and political system of Elizabethan and Jacobean England and to the particular institutions of cultural production (the court, patronage, theatre, education, the church). Moreover, the relevant history is not just that of four hundred years ago, for culture is made continuously and Shakespeare's text is reconstructed, re-appraised, reassigned all the time through diverse institutions in specific contexts. What the plays signify, how they signify, depends on *the cultural field in which they are situated*.¹³⁵

In 1985 — the same year as the publication of *Political Shakespeare* — Belsey published her influential book *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama*, once again from Routledge. In this study of the construction of subjectivity in the Renaissance, Belsey argues:

We make a narrative out of the available 'documents', the written texts (and maps and buildings and suits of armour) we interpret in order to produce a

¹³⁴ Ibid., 29.

¹³⁵ Dollimore and Sinfield, p. viii.

knowledge of a world which is no longer present. And yet it is always from the present that we produce this knowledge: from the present in the sense that it is only from what is still extant, still available, that we make it; and from the present in the sense that we make it out of an understanding formed by the present.¹³⁶

Hawkes similarly argues in *That Shakespeherian Rag: Essays on a Critical Process* (1986) that Shakespeare's plays are 'always open to manifold interpretations' and that they 'constitute highly significant and sensitive areas in which competing forces within *our* society struggle for domination. The outcome of that struggle determines a multitude of central priorities and "realities" of *our* way of life'.¹³⁷ Hawkes presents the same view in his *Meaning by Shakespeare* (1992): 'the plays have the same function as, and work like, the words of which they are made. We *use* them in order to generate meaning. In the twentieth century, Shakespeare's plays have become one of the central agencies through which our culture performs this operation. That is what they do, that is how they work, and that is what they are for. Shakespeare doesn't mean: *we* mean *by* Shakespeare'.¹³⁸

This *bifocal* reading of literary texts mirrors a prototypical characteristic of cultural materialism. For cultural materialism the text, or rather meanings of the text, do not exist in the fixed moment of production. Moreover, cultural materialists' bifocal readings often make reference to the institutions which enforce political stances in the contemporary world — for example, the British educational system, the theatre, and contemporary political events. Traditional critics often blame recent critical movements for 'politicising' Shakespeare and Renaissance drama. The term 'political' refers not merely to the high politics of government but also to issues of

¹³⁶ *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London and New York; Routledge, 1985), p. 1.

¹³⁷ *That Shakespeherian Rag: Essays on a Critical Process* (London and New York: Methuen, 1986), p. 123 (emphasis added).

¹³⁸ *Meaning by Shakespeare* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 3. See also his most recent collection of essays on presentism, *Shakespeare in the Present*, Accents on Shakespeare Series (London: Routledge, 2002).

social discourse which surround the development of subjectivity, especially gender, class, and race. Moreover, these political stances are liberal and usually left-wing. As Dollimore and Sinfield declare, 'cultural materialism does not pretend to political neutrality'.¹³⁹ As the title of Dollimore and Sinfield's anthology clearly reveals, cultural materialism kindles its enthusiasm, or even its ardent mission, from the politicisation of Shakespeare, a unique feature of this approach.

As Kamps rightly informs us, there was political criticism of Shakespeare long before the rise of feminism, cultural materialism, and new historicism. E. M. W. Tillyard, L. C. Knights, and Lily Beth Campbell, for example, engaged with Elizabethan political beliefs. But what differentiates cultural materialism from former political criticism is that the way in which its understanding of the text is conducted is charged with the socio-political and cultural ideologies of the historical *present* by which the critics themselves are interpellated. The works of cultural materialists such as Dollimore and Sinfield, as well as feminists (feminist materialists) such as Catherine Belsey and Katherine McLuskie, often refer to contemporary cultural institutions and to current relationships of power.

For cultural materialists, Shakespeare has become, or more precisely has been 'manufactured' as, a cultural icon 'through the media of education, industry, theatre and the heritage business'.¹⁴⁰ In the second edition of his *Radical Tragedy* (1989), Dollimore contends that materialist criticism 'relates both the literary canon and changing interpretations of it to the cultural formations which produce(d) them, and which those interpretations in turn reproduced, or help to change'.¹⁴¹ It is for this reason that cultural materialists like Dollimore and Sinfield (and material feminists

¹³⁹ Dollimore and Sinfield, p. viii.

¹⁴⁰ Brannigan, p. 13.

¹⁴¹ Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology, and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*, (Durham: Duke University, 1984; 2nd edn, 1993), p. xv (2nd edn).

such as Belsey) are 'alert to the possibilities of making Shakespeare meaningful in the context of *contemporary* politics and culture'.¹⁴² Cultural materialism is interested not only in ideologies of the past but also in those of the present.

A good example to demonstrate the ways in which Shakespeare is used in the cultural context of our own time is the academic use of Shakespeare biography as part of the institutionalisation of the dramatist under pressure from the government. In July 1999, almost two years after the publication of his own Lancastrian theory in the *TLS*, Richard Wilson, along with his colleague Richard Dutton, organised an international Shakespeare conference at Lancaster University in association with Houghton Tower.¹⁴³ Anthony Holden revealed in *The Observer* the project to turn Houghton Tower into a study centre and library with a theatre. Wilson was to be the director of the research centre, and a Labour politician had been invited to become chairman of the trustees.¹⁴⁴ With this project and the conference (which itself was part of the project) Wilson had attempted not only to propagate but also to *institutionalise* his Lancastrian theory.

Not only are cultural materialists interested in ideologies of the present, but they also aim to challenge social and political norms. In the foreword to *Political Shakespeare*, Dollimore and Sinfield pose the principle of cultural materialism:

[. . .] our belief is that a combination of historical context, theoretical method, political commitment and textual analysis offers the strongest challenge and has already contributed substantial work. Historical context undermines the transcendent significance traditionally accorded to the literary text and allows us to recover its histories; theoretical method detaches the text from immanent criticism which seeks only to reproduce it in its own terms; socialist and feminist commitment confronts the conservative categories in which most criticism has hitherto been conducted; textual analysis locates the

¹⁴² Brannigan, p. 13.

¹⁴³ 'Lancastrian Shakespeare: A Conference on Region, Religion, Patronage and Performance' (Lancaster University, 21–23 July 1999). Keynotes speakers included Eamon Duffy, Stephen Greenblatt, Anthony Holden, Peter Milward, and Richard Wilson.

¹⁴⁴ Anthony Holden, 'William the Younger', *The Guardian* (18 July 1999) < <http://www.guardianunlimited.co.uk> >.

critique of traditional approaches where it cannot be ignored. We call this 'cultural materialism'.¹⁴⁵

As is clear from this statement, cultural materialism, like new historicism, sees itself in opposition to formalism or new criticism; it commits itself to historicize, theorise, and socialise literary texts. Cultural materialism, however, takes the project one step further. What differentiates it from new historicism is its commitment to the interpretation of literary texts through political agendas. It has overt political ends; it aims to promote (to use Dollimore and Sinfield's words) 'social and feminist commitment'.

Cultural materialism, Dollimore and Sinfield claim, 'registers its commitment to the transformation of a social order which exploits people on grounds of race, gender and class'.¹⁴⁶ In Shakespeare studies, cultural materialism analyses the dramatist's position and the political function of his works in contemporary culture. 'Like new historicism', as Brannigan comments, 'cultural materialism has been successful in displacing traditional humanist and formalist readings of literature with readings which are more sensitive to the problems of ensuring the adequate representation of oppressed and marginalized groups in literary and cultural debate'.¹⁴⁷ Cultural materialism, it is contended, has cast light upon problems which conservative interpretations had neglected — the problems associated with 'the Other'.

Cultural materialists' political agendas are liberal and left-wing; they aim not only to examine the operations of power in the past but also to explore the possibilities for subversion in the contemporary world. For cultural materialists, reading Shakespeare is a political activity. Their studies of Shakespeare are themselves dissident; they assume that reading Shakespeare 'reflects and shapes the meanings

¹⁴⁵ Dollimore and Sinfield, p. vii.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. viii.

¹⁴⁷ Brannigan, p. 116.

which we as a society assign to texts and cultural practices, and it is therefore also a site of contest between competing political ideologies'.¹⁴⁸ For cultural materialists texts yield dissident readings, which can be read against conservative readings which have formed Shakespeare's iconic status.

The decisive difference between new historicism and cultural materialism, as I have suggested, is how they see and approach the issue of subversion. New historicism proposes that subversion is always contained. Greenblatt concludes 'Invisible Bullets' on a pessimistic note that 'there is subversion, no end of subversion, only not for us'.¹⁴⁹ Cultural materialism, to the contrary, presents a more optimistic view that 'even where subversion is contained, traces of it enable the dissident critic to articulate this subversion and thereby contest the meaning attributed to it by the dominant culture'. Hence, such cultural materialists as Dollimore, Sinfield, and Belsey call for 'the need to reinterpret and reorient radically our understanding of power relations in the past and the present'. Their calls 'are imbued with the urgency of a political manifesto', and this 'heightened engagement with the politics of culture characterises cultural materialism as distinct from the more neutral pretence of new historicism'.¹⁵⁰

As new historicism has its own problems, so does cultural materialism. Cultural materialism attentively looks for dissidence among those suffering subordination; it aims to demonstrate where culture contains conflicts and tensions which allow articulation of subversive perspectives. Frank Lentricchia argues that 'ruling culture does not define the whole of culture, though it tries to, and it is the task of the oppositional critic to re-read culture so as to amplify and strategically position

¹⁴⁸ Brannigan, p. 110.

¹⁴⁹ P. 57.

¹⁵⁰ Brannigan, pp. 109 and 114.

the marginalized voices of the ruled, exploited, oppressed, and excluded'. Dollimore endorses his contention.¹⁵¹ Yet more and more cultural materialists tend to reduce Shakespeare's texts deliberately to the level of political agendas. Of course, there are exceptions, but cultural materialism seems to be using Shakespeare as a background for, or a means by which it supports, its own political agendas. The balance of interpretation seems to have been lost.

V. Deconstructing Dominance/Subordination

Recent critical developments in Shakespeare scholarship have surely made possible new understandings of the dramatist's works which mark 'a sharp conceptual and methodological break with earlier modes of interpretation'. Many materialist critics, however, have deemed Shakespeare's works 'overdetermined' ideological products on the basis of the critics' simple model of a power system in society.¹⁵² Both new historicism and cultural materialism have proposed using literary texts as equivalent sources with other texts in an attempt to examine the cultural, social, and political fabric of the past. Unfortunately, both critical approaches reduce the complex heterogeneous structure of cultural discourse to a simple homogeneous model of the authority/subversion dichotomy.¹⁵³ Their schemes of the operation of power are based upon a simple 'dominance/subordination' dichotomy. Both approaches share a belief in the possibility of structural determination.

New historicist and cultural materialist models of power claim that power is formulated through the tension and conflicts between dominance and subordination.

¹⁵¹ Frank Lentricchia, *Criticism and Social Changes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 15, quoted in Dollimore and Sinfield, p. 14; Dollimore and Sinfield, p. 14.

¹⁵² Kamps, introduction to *Materialist Shakespeare*, p. 14.

¹⁵³ I am not arguing that all new historicists share Greenblatt's scheme.

As we have seen, Foucault's thinking in his early years was similarly occupied with the binary opposites domination/subordination. In his later work, however, Foucault emphasised the *heterogeneity* of the power system. According to him, 'power is everywhere not because it embraces everything but because it comes from everywhere'. In *The Will to Knowledge (The History of Sexuality I)*, for example, Foucault argues:

Power comes from below; that is, there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations, and serving as a general matrix — no such duality extending from the top down and reacting on more and more limited groups to the very depths of the social body. One must suppose rather that the *manifold relationships of force* that take shape and come into play in the machinery of production, in families, limited groups, and institutions, are the basis for wide-ranging effects of cleavage that run through the social body as a whole.¹⁵⁴

We can thus conclude that for Foucault power is relation that cannot be possessed or mastered by individual subjects or institutions and that power is exercised and guided by a series of aims from various sources.

The model of power relationships which new historicism and cultural materialism present lacks the more complex *heterogeneous* nature of the later Foucauldian model. New historicism and cultural materialism are still stuck in a simple model of the power system based upon structural determination and the domination and subversion dichotomy. As Raymond Williams insists, 'alternative political and cultural emphases, and the *many forms* of opposition and struggle, are important not only in themselves but as indicative features of what the hegemonic process has in practice had to work to control'.¹⁵⁵

As we have seen, both new historicism and cultural materialism reduce the complex heterogeneous structure of cultural discourse to a simple homogeneous

¹⁵⁴ Foucault, *La Volonté de savoir* (1976); translated under the title *The History of Sexuality* by Robert Hurley, 3 vols (USA and Canada, 1978; UK, 1979), I: *An Introduction*; repr. under the title *The Will to Knowledge* (London and New York: Penguin, 1998), p. 94 (emphasis added).

¹⁵⁵ *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 113 (emphasis added).

model of the ‘dominance/subordination’ or ‘authority/subversion’ dichotomy because their schemes of the operation of power rest on belief in the possibility of structural determination. It is precisely this theoretical premise that is the source of the problem. That is, as soon as structuralist determination is accepted as a principle, there exist only two possibilities: either we can, like new historicism, attempt to examine how this structural determination takes place in the Renaissance and how subjects can be manufactured by the structure; or we can, like cultural materialism, identify the ways in which subjects resist structural determination.

I believe, however, that authors (both biographers and their subjects) are involved in a much more complex system of cultural discourse than the scheme of formations and operations of ideology and power which materialists have presented to us so far. The authors’ negotiation and re-negotiation take place in a multi-dimensional framework of cultural discourses. New historicism and cultural materialism end up with the fallacy of excessive significance (i.e., finding in texts what may not be ‘there’) — they find in the Renaissance a structure which we thought existed but actually did not exist.

A solution to the problem of structural determinism in new historicist and cultural materialist premise and practice can be found by problematising the whole notion of structural determination. To do so, we should go back to Greenblatt’s original notion of the ‘poetics of culture’, which he abandoned by the time of the publication of *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, and see it in the context of poststructuralist discourse theory.¹⁵⁶ Poststructuralism, as deconstruction represents it, puts into question the traditional notion of closed and centred totalising structures. It instead emphasises ‘the instability and contingency of the structural context of social

¹⁵⁶ See, for example, Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe and Zizek* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999).

interaction'.¹⁵⁷ It is this *lack of structural determination* that casts new light on Greenblatt's original theory of the 'poetics of culture'. Greenblatt emphasises:

Self-fashioning is in effect the Renaissance version of these control mechanisms [for the governing of behaviour, which Clifford Geertz introduces in his book *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973)], the cultural system of meanings that creates specific individuals by governing the passage from abstract potential to concrete historical embodiment. Literature functions within this system in three interlocking ways: as a manifestation of the concrete behavior of its particular author, as itself the expression of the codes by which behavior is shaped, and as a reflection upon those codes.¹⁵⁸

Greenblatt claims that the reading of the text must concern itself with all three of these functions. However, traditional humanist critics seem to have focused too much upon the third function and consequently neglected the other two; in the end, they 'drastically diminish[ed] our grasp of art's concrete functions in relation to individuals and to institutions, both of which [shrank] into an obligatory "historical background" that adds little to our understanding'.¹⁵⁹ Many — but not all — recent materialist critics seem to have been engaged exclusively in the second function and neglected the other two; they have viewed the text 'exclusively as the expression of social rules and instructions'. In the end, as traditional humanist critics have pointed out, Shakespeare's plays have been 'absorbed entirely into an ideological superstructure'.¹⁶⁰

Greenblatt insists that the 'poetics of culture' is an approach that is 'necessarily a *balancing act* — correcting each of the [three] functional perspectives [. . .] — and necessarily impure: its central concerns prevent it from permanently sealing off one type of discourse from another or decisively separating works of art from the minds and lives of their creators and their audiences'.¹⁶¹ As I have discussed

¹⁵⁷ Torfing, p. 54.

¹⁵⁸ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, pp. 3–4.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5 (emphasis added).

so far, traditional humanists have focused vigorously upon the artistic features of Shakespeare's plays, and materialists upon ideologies and discourses in them. Both scholarly groups have neglected the third function: the author.

Greenblatt declares that the subjectivity is 'unfree' from cultural discourses in a certain society because the subjectivity is always fashioned in relationship to these discourses; the self and cultural discourses are 'inseparably intertwined' and always under pressure from each other. Therefore, it is 'illusion' that the human subject is the principal or exclusive creator of his or her own identity which is completely free from cultural discourses.

What takes in the absence of structural determination is *hegemony*, 'an articulatory practice instituting nodal points that *partially* fix the meaning of the social in an organized system of difference'.¹⁶² Social interactions take place 'within a context of sedimented structures; however, since these structures lack a privileged centre and do not totali[s]e and exhaust the field of identity, they are constantly changed by the articulations they make possible but fail to master'. Hegemony is 'an expansion of a discourse or set of discourses' into socio-political orientation and action 'by means of articulating unfixed elements into partially fixed moments in a context crisscrossed by antagonistic forces'. This does not mean that hegemonic practices comprise nothing but chaotic flux, but rather that hegemony 'brings us from the undecidable level of non-totali[s]able openness to a decidable level of discourse'.¹⁶³ Moreover, this absence of ideological structure prevents the subject from being determined by the structure. That is, the subject is not passively interpellated by ideology but actively reacts and respond to it. Categories which new historicism and cultural materialism would emphasise were never fixed but rather

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 109 (emphasis added).

¹⁶³ Ibid., pp. 7 and 102.

open for a series of negotiation and renegotiation. Authors (both biographers and their subjects) are part of this hegemonic articulation of ethical-religious and socio-political discourses. What we have is not simply negotiations but a series of negotiations and renegotiations.

Authors (both biographers and their subjects) are situated, in fact, within the discursive framework of a specific culture. This does not mean that it is impossible to be critical or subversive but that there is a certain limitation to what can be thought. As Mills insists, 'Foucault is not arguing that there are no creative individuals. He is arguing instead that all individuals are potentially creative within the discursive constraints which enable ideas and texts to be produced'.¹⁶⁴ Therefore, we ought to explore the manifold ways in which Shakespeare, the biographer/reader, and culture (or cultures) affect one another. An alternative to the traditional humanist criticism should be a study of Shakespeare in relation to socio-political and cultural discourses and institutions, for the process of the fashioning of subjectivity — both Shakespeare and the biographer/reader — is woven into the complex fabric of cultures in a specific society. We ought to inspect a variety of cultural phenomena that formulate the heterogeneous cultural matrix of the society.

Each author fashions himself or herself through his or her *unique negotiation and renegotiation* with a particular cultural discourse. This unique interplay differentiates one author from the others. Traditional humanist critics neglected the cultural discourse with which the author was engaged. Recent criticism has undervalued the concept of the 'author'. It is time to re-focus upon the 'author' in a postmodernist manner. We study authors in relation to two types of cultural forces:

¹⁶⁴ Mills, p. 74.

one to which the authors were subject, and another to which we (biographers) are subject.

The Recent Historiography of the English Reformation: Its Impact on Shakespeare Biography

In chapter 1 I have examined the changes in Shakespeare studies since the 1970s and the influence of new historicism. As the modes of Shakespeare studies changed between the 1970s and the 2000s, so did those of the study of early modern England. It is therefore essential to examine the historiography that has been available to Shakespeare biographers since new historicism started to draw their attention to early modern English history. Studies of Catholicism in Tudor England emerged in the 1950s and became highly fashionable in the 1960s and the 1970s. This vogue reached its peak in the 1980s and the 1990s — the period during which new historicism became influential in Shakespeare studies, and a revival of interest in Shakespeare biography took place. Catholicisation of Shakespeare is partly to do with timing. To understand the matrix in which the Catholicisation of Shakespeare in recent biographies took place, we must examine the recent historiography of English Reformation studies.¹

I. The ‘Political’ Reformation

The modern historiography of the English Reformation began, as Peter Marshall points out, with A. G. Dickens.² To understand Dickens’s importance in the

¹ The present chapter does not feature discussion of ‘post-revisionism’, which is beginning to replace ‘revisionism’ (which I shall examine later in this chapter) as a new orthodoxy. This is because literary critics have caught up with revisionism but have not yet taken on board post-revisionism, and the Lancastrian theories have not been influenced by its argument.

² Introduction to *The Impact of the English Reformation 1500–1640* (London and New York: Arnold, 1997), p. 1.

historiography of the English Reformation, let us first survey the conventional view of the Reformation before the publication of Dickens's work. Before Dickens's view became the orthodoxy in the historiography of the English Reformation, historians saw the Reformation as a 'political' or 'official' event (as opposed to Dickens's 'popular' Reformation). Albert Frederick Pollard (1869–1948), the first director (1921–39) of the Institute of Historical Research,³ argued in his biography of Henry VIII for a 'political' or 'official' Reformation: it was Henry who wanted reform.⁴ Pollard's biography of the king was reissued as late as 1966 as a standard student text of the English Reformation.⁵ It was not surprising that in the 1950s a school of political historians who saw the Reformation as an event rapidly imposed from above established itself as the norm. This school stressed the political, rather than religious, roots of the English Reformation.

The most influential figure of this school was Geoffrey R. Elton, who presented the Reformation as part of the reform campaign initiated and carried out in the 1530s, not by Henry, but by Thomas Cromwell. This view of the English Reformation was first presented in his doctoral thesis submitted to the University of London in 1948.⁶ During the following three decades Elton produced a large number of influential monographs and articles, presenting the Reformation in this light. In Elton's view the English Reformation was part of Cromwell's reform of government and administration which included the nationalization of the Church of England, and

³ In 1904 Pollard called for the establishment of a London school of history, a postgraduate institution for historical research and a university press. There emerged the foundation of the Institute. The idea behind this venture was to provide a forum for the discussion of theory and practice in historical research.

⁴ Pollard, *Henry VIII, King of England* (London: Goupil & Co., 1902).

⁵ O'Day, *The Debate on the English Reformation* (London and New York: Methuen, 1986), p. 110.

⁶ G. R. Elton, 'Thomas Cromwell: Aspects of His Administrative Work' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1948).

part of which was an ecclesiastical reform to purge the parishes of superstition.⁷ In *Reform and Reformation, England 1509–1558* (1977), he acknowledged Cromwell's Protestantism to some degree, but for him Cromwell's intention was secular; the religious reform was part of his political agenda. The political reform was carried further under Edward VI. Although there certainly was frequent resistance to the changes, Elton asserted that by 1553 England was 'almost certainly nearer to being a Protestant country than to anything else'.⁸

Political historians' conventional methodology lay in the examination of 'official' documents. Pollard's biography, for example, was based on his study of *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, which summarised, rather than faithfully transcribed, actual documents. He sometimes neglected relevant administrative and legal documents in the Public Record Office and other documentary sources stored elsewhere 'which supplied evidence of public opinion from another standpoint than that of the government'. As a result, 'his interpretation of the English Reformation was heavily slanted towards official policy'.⁹ Elton focused on 'the process of the policy-formation and enforcement' of the Reformation by examining statutes, state papers and the administrative records of the government. Their methodologies enabled Pollard and Elton to show how the reform programme became the political centre, and how the government imposed its reform policies on the localities. But their methodologies prevented both historians from examining to what degree reform was accepted in the localities.

⁷ Elton, *England under the Tudors* (London: Methuen, 1955), pp. 160–2, 165–70 and 175–9; Elton, *Henry VIII: An Essay in Revision* (London: Historical Association, 1962).

⁸ Elton, *Reform and Reformation: England, 1509–1558* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), p. 371 (see also pp. 157–200, 273–95 and 353–75); *Policy and Police: Enforcement of the Reformation in the Age of Thomas Cromwell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972).

⁹ O'Day, p. 110.

II. A 'Popular' Reformation (Rapid Reformation from Below)

As we have seen, the conventional view of the English Reformation had been 'embedded in a somewhat ossified historiographical tradition' that had been 'content to epitomize the course of the Reformation in England simply as an "act of state"'.¹⁰ In the 1960s a new school of historians emerged, shifting the debate over the nature or causes of the English Reformation. The new school followed the lead of A. G. Dickens, who focused on religious change on the local level. In the preface to his *The English Reformation* (1964), he wrote, 'I have sought to depict the movement [i.e., the English Reformation] as it affected ordinary men and women, who have somehow tended to fall and disappear through the gaps between the kings, the prelates, the monasteries and the prayer books'.¹¹ He thus focused upon diocesan archival research of underused sources, which recorded not the Reformation of politicians but (in his own words) 'the Reformation of the man in the street', and 'it has proved possible to trace the impact of the official Reformation upon the parishes and the growth of reformed opinion in the localities'.¹²

In the process Dickens developed a new methodology for evaluating religious change. As Marshall puts it, Dickens's method of utilizing such archival sources as wills, church court records and parish accounts continued to be followed by generations of historians. In this sense, it is not an exaggeration that '[m]ore than any other development in post-war Reformation historiography, this has transformed our

¹⁰ Marshall, introduction to *The Impact of the English Reformation 1500–1640*, p. 1.

¹¹ P. v.

¹² Dickens, *The English Reformation* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1964; 2nd edn, 1989; repr. 1999), p. v; Haigh, 'Some Aspects of the Recent Historiography of the English Reformation', in *Stadtbürgertum und Adel in der Reformation: Studien zur Sozialgeschichte der Reformation in England und Deutschland*, ed. by Wolfgang J. Mommsen (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1979), pp. 88–106; revised as 'The Recent Historiography of the English Reformation', *The Historical Journal* 25 (1982), 995–1007 (p. 102).

understanding of the topic'.¹³ Dickens 'attempted to complement the familiar political narrative with a strong "socio-biographical" emphasis which stressed the autonomous contribution of individual reformers, and the considerable potential of Protestantism to make converts, often in advance of, or in opposition to, official government policy'.¹⁴ Since the historians of this school focused on the interaction of the religious and socio-political roots of the English Reformation, they may be called 'religious' or 'church historians' as opposed to 'political historians' of the old school in the previous decades, who emphasised the secular, political roots of the Reformation.¹⁵ Dickens argued that by 1553 Protestantism had gained strength at the 'popular' level independently of the 'political' or 'official' Reformation. He asserted that since Protestantism had spread and gained strength through conversions among the ordinary people, the Henrician Reformation was enthusiastically received and supported in the localities. In Dickens's view the Reformation was originally a popular movement, not solely an act of the government.

Dickens also sought to demonstrate the linkage between late Lollardy and early Protestantism and emphasised the speed of the expansion of Protestantism at the popular level in Henrician England. He asserted that the laity was far less interested in theology than religious writers and propagandists. It was Lollardy that had a much wider appeal to them. The Lollards were extremely active in London, Essex, Coventry, Kent, Bristol and the diocese of York. Yet Lollardy itself did not bring about the Reformation, for it failed to capture the support of the ruling class and lacked any national organisation. For these reasons and others, Lollardy was 'an evasive, unheroic and underground affair'. It lay 'far too low in society to achieve a

¹³ Marshall, introduction to *The Impact of the English Reformation 1500–1640*, p. 1.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁵ O'Day, pp. 131–2 (she uses the term 'religious historian'). O'Day notes that '[t]o be fair, Elton, Pollard, Hurstfield and Scarisbrick would not wish to be classified as anything other than political or administrative historians' (p. 132).

Reformation unaided'.¹⁶ But Bible-reading Lollard conventicles and evangelists passed on the ideas of both Lollardy and Lutheranism and prepared lay people for the Reformation. In the sixteenth century a group of intellectual clerics discovered Luther and introduced his ideas into both universities. This movement, according to Dickens, 'soon found lay support, both in the international world of the merchants and among members of the former Lollard groups of London and south-eastern England'.¹⁷

In Dickens's account, the continuity from Lollardy to Protestantism is symbolised by the exchange of Wycliffe texts for William Tyndale's New Testament, whose distribution in England was arranged by among others Robert Barnes and Thomas Garret.¹⁸ 'Old heresy and the new began to merge together from about the time Tyndale's Testament came into English hands. From this stage onward the turmoil of anti-Catholic teachings prevalent in Germany began to be paralleled in England'.¹⁹ Dickens emphasised the role of lay people: 'the force of this new appeal to the laity resided less in Luther's doctrine of the priesthood of all believers than in the fact that Lutheranism, enormously aided by the printers, placed the primary evidences of the Christian Faith in the hands of laymen'.²⁰ The Lollards provided 'a spring-board of critical dissent from which the Protestant reformation could overleap the walls of orthodoxy'. They created 'reception-areas for Lutheranism'.²¹ As a result, argued Dickens, Protestantism became an overwhelming force by the 1530s.

Dickens recognised English Catholicism as 'an old, unseaworthy and ill-commanded galleon, scarcely able to continue its voyage without the new seamen and shipwrights produced (but produced too late in the day) by the Counter-

¹⁶ Dickens, *The English Reformation*, p. 32.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 327.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 34–5 and 70–5 (p. 35).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 327.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

Reformation'.²² In addition, Dickens argued that the higher clergy of the Catholic Church were too involved in politics and the lower clergy were too uneducated to meet the demand for a personal involvement in official religion which had been rising among lay people.²³ They also 'lacked both the time and the intellectual background to become worthy exponents or regenerators of Catholic theology'.²⁴

Although Dickens admitted that resistance did take place, he insisted that it was a minor, unpopular event. The laity 'was sufficiently taught by their priests to dislike the idea of heresy', and '[m]ost of the subjects of Henry VIII believed that rebellion itself was a sin'. Dickens argued that the Pilgrimage of Grace could not be regarded 'as a devout crusade to save the rights of Holy Church, to re-edify the monasteries, to overthrow low-born heretics, to restore England to a papalist Christendom. [. . .] the English remained incapable of staging genuine Wars of Religion'.²⁵

In Dickens's view, Catholics were residual problems in the Elizabethan period:

[the threat] of Catholicism remained insignificant for a decade. [. . .] During the first years some of the more nominal conformists may have been saying masses in secret to groups of Catholics, yet little open defiance appeared. When at last in 1569 a Catholic-feudal rebellion arose, it completely failed to engage more than a small section of northern England and did not even come near to capturing York.²⁶

He also insisted on the discontinuity of pre- and post-Reformation Catholicism:

Until the papal bull of 1570 excommunicated Elizabeth and urged her subjects to depose her, Catholic recusancy scarcely existed upon any measurable scale. English Catholicism was re-created during the last three decades of the reign by the adventurous labours of the Seminarists and Jesuits. [. . .] yet the fact remains that they were sent by superiors and rulers with every intention of using their work as a basis for the forcible imposition of a foreign Catholic monarch upon England.²⁷

²² Ibid., p. 108. See also Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York 1509–1558* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959; 2nd edn, London: Hambledon, 1982).

²³ Dickens, *The English Reformation*, pp. 42–58.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 180.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 126–8.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 311.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 311.

Dickens thus concluded that although during the 1580s–90s ‘under missionary influence the number of recusants grew apace in certain areas of England’, recusants, except in Lancashire, ‘constituted a very small part of the population’. In short, he argued, ‘English Catholicism looked [. . .] more formidable than it was, and its adherents suffered accordingly’.²⁸

In the 1940s Dickens studied religious change in the diocese of York and formulated the distinction between ‘survivalism’ and ‘seminarism’. He argued that conservatism in the parish churches had died out by 1575 and that recusant Catholicism emerged only after 1577.²⁹ As his theory of a popular Reformation became the orthodoxy in historiography of the English Reformation, his emphasis on the discontinuity between pre- and post-Reformation Catholicism also received support in the 1960s and the 1970s. C. H. Aveling, for example, asserted that English medieval Catholicism died between 1534 and 1570 and that thereafter the combination of revival in England and the missionary effort of the seminaries created

²⁸ Ibid., p. 312. Dickens shifted interpretation of the religious change in England in favour of a ‘popular’ Reformation. For him it was a ‘rapid Reformation from below’. In the 1960s and the 1970s Dickens’s conclusion received strong support from other regional studies of Essex, Bristol, Gloucestershire and Cambridgeshire where Lollardy had previously made progress and early Protestant clergy were later active. For example, Claire Cross, in her *Church and People 1450–1660* (1976), presented the English Reformation as the triumph of the laity. Medieval laypeople, being jealous of the privileges of the clergy, wanted to participate in religious life and to read the Scriptures in the vernacular. They abhorred such abuses of the church as the squandering of wealth, the neglect of the poor, the abysmal pastoral performance of the priests, and the corruption of the monasteries. (*Church and People 1450–1660* (London: Fontana, 1976; 2nd edn, Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 9–52.) As late as 1983, J. F. Davis supported the links between Lollardy and Protestantism by demonstrating that there were localities in the south east with active Lollard communities. These were areas characterised by the high rate of literacy on the part of craftsmen, which enabled Lutheran influences from abroad to reinforce such emphases of English Lollardy as evangelism, emphasis on the Scriptures, opposition to saint worship, and anti-clericalism. (See *Heresy and Reformation in the South-East of England 1520–1559* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1983).) Dickens also received support from: James Edwin Oxley, *The Reformation in Essex to the Death of Mary* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1965); K. G. Powell, *The Marian Martyrs and Reformation in Bristol* (Bristol: Historical Association, 1972); Powell, ‘The Beginning of Protestantism in Gloucestershire’, *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* 90 (1971), 145–8; Powell, ‘The Social Background to the Reformation in Gloucestershire’, *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* 92 (1973), 96–120; Margaret Spufford, *Contrasting Communities: English Villagers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

²⁹ ‘The First Stage of Romanist Recusancy in Yorkshire, 1560–1590’, *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 35 (1941), 157–82.

a new Catholic community in England.³⁰ John Bossy argued that the post-Reformation English Catholic community was created by the seminary priests and Jesuits after 1570, stressing the distinction between medieval Catholicism and Counter-Reformation Catholicism.³¹

III. Revisionism: A Slow Reformation from Above

Historians who detected a 'rapid Reformation' (whether from above or from below) viewed the English Reformation as an *event* that discarded Catholicism and welcomed Protestantism. For them England was ready for reform by the 1530s. More recent historiography of the English Reformation contrasts sharply with the historiography of previous decades. In the 1970s historians began to recognise the English Reformation not as a single event but as a long, complex *process*, and the orthodoxy encountered serious challenges. The historians of this new school are now commonly called 'revisionists' and have focused on the laity 'who upheld the [old] faith during the worst of penal times, and condemned the Protestant Reformation out of hand', and stressed the continuity of traditional Catholicism in the English Reformation.³² For

³⁰ *The Handle and the Axe: The Catholic Recusants in England from Reformation to Emancipation* (London: Blond and Briggs, 1976), pp. 19, 27, 43–49, 52, 56–61 and 65.

³¹ *The English Catholic Community 1570–1850* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1975), pp. 4–5, 11–12, 106–7 and 147; 'The Character of Elizabethan Catholicism', *Past and Present* 21 (1962), 39–59; 'The Counter-Reformation and the People of Catholic Ireland, 1596–1641', *Historical Studies* 8 (1971), 155–70. See also Bossy, 'The Counter-Reformation and the People of Catholic Europe', *Past and Present* 47 (1970), 51–70 (especially pp. 52–4 and 62–7). Contrast Bossy to Ralph A. Houlbrooke's study of the early Tudor dioceses of Norwich and Winchester in *Church Courts and the People during the English Reformation, 1520–1570* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 222–3, and to Haigh's overview in 'The Continuity of Catholicism in the English Reformation', *Past and Present* 93 (1981), 37–69.

³² Martin J. Havran, 'The British Isles', in *Catholicism in Early Modern History: A Guide to Research*, Reformation Guides to Research Series (St. Louis: Centre for Reformation Research, 1988), pp. 69–82 (p. 69).

them ‘Catholicism survived through the Reformation, and was properly called “the old religion” by its adherents’.³³

The revisionist interest in regional studies was a reflection of the methodology Dickens had introduced. Christopher Haigh, the prominent revisionist of the 1970s–80s, argued that in the history of the Reformations, ‘people’ mattered in three ways:

First, because the Reformations were about what ‘people’ should think and do. Both Catholics and Protestants cared about souls; they thought their own truth would help souls to heaven, and their enemies’ error would send souls to perdition. What ‘people’ thought was an issue for Bishop Edmund Bonner and for Bishop Nicholas Ridley, because they were Christian pastors as well as ecclesiastical politicians. It was an issue for them, and it must be an issue for historians who want to comprehend them. Secondly, the ‘people’ mattered to governments, since there was constant risk of disorder or rebellion if surly subjects were provoked by insensitive policies. If we have no sense of what various sorts of ‘people’ thought, we can never understand political decisions. [. . .] Thirdly, ‘people’ mattered in these Reformations because they were there and they took part. [. . .] everywhere, always, people obeyed or did not obey the rules of Reformation or de-Reformation, and their obedience or disobedience is Reformation history.³⁴

The English Reformation (or ‘English Reformations’ for Haigh) ‘included the responses of millions of men, women, and children, whose names we will not know, but whose presence and participation are facts of history’.³⁵

Historians who followed Dickens’s methodology and examined visitation act books and other manuscripts in local record offices could not help but question and challenge Dickens’s ‘rapid Reformation from below’, for they found a ‘diversity of local responses to the Reformation pressure’.³⁶ In a sense, revisionism is a reaction against the orthodoxy’s Whig interpretation — interpretation of history ‘as the continuing and inevitable victory of progress over reaction’.³⁷ In this chapter I shall

³³ Christopher Haigh, ‘The Continuity of Catholicism in the English Reformation’, *Past and Present* 93 (1981), 37–69 (p. 69).

³⁴ Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 19.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

³⁶ Haigh, ‘Some Aspects of the Recent Historiography of the English Reformation’, p. 102. See also Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants*, pp. 1–7 and *passim*.

³⁷ *OED*, s.v. ‘Whig history’.

survey major revisionist accounts of the English Reformation by focusing upon those presented by three of the most prominent Reformation historians — Christopher Haigh, J. J. Scarisbrick and Eamon Duffy³⁸ — and contrasting their accounts to Dickens's. All of these three revisionists have clearly stated their criticism of the Whig history of the English Reformation constructed by the orthodoxy.³⁹ Haigh saw that the Whig interpretation was 'a highly selective approach to the past: it exaggerates conflict, accelerates change, and gives a one-sided story of protest and victory. [. . .] such distilled history is an illusion; it is not how the past was'.⁴⁰

Haigh, Scarisbrick and Duffy recognised the English Reformation as a series of crises rather than a victory. Their presentation of a problem-oriented history of the English Reformation is not surprising once we understand the impact of Herbert Butterfield's *The Whig Interpretation of History* (1931) and the French *Annales* school, which both challenged the Whig tradition. In England, Butterfield's *The Whig Interpretation of History* exposed the weaknesses (as well as strengths) of the traditional narrative of progressivism.⁴¹ He challenged 'the tendency in many historians to write on the side of Protestants and Whigs, to praise revolutions provided they have been successful, to emphasise certain principles of progress in the past and to produce a story which is the ratification if not the glorification of the present'.⁴²

³⁸ Scarisbrick and Duffy themselves are Catholics, while Haigh has emphasised that he is not a Catholic (see his *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. vii–viii). Peter Marshall has sensitively pointed out that 'it may be more charitable, as well as more honest, to accept that in the postmodern world which we all inhabit no one is in a position to pretend to a total neo-Rankean objectivity about the past "as it actually was", and that diversity of committed perspectives can enrich our understanding of the religious change which took place in this period' (Marshall, introduction to *The Impact of the English Reformation 1500–1640*, p. 4). See also Alison Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy and the English Literary Imagination, 1558–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 4–6.

³⁹ Scarisbrick, p. 1; Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 6; Haigh, *English Reformations*, p. 15.

⁴⁰ *English Reformations*, pp. 15–6.

⁴¹ *The Whig Interpretation of History* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1931).

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. v.

In France, the journal *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale* founded in 1929 'promoted a new kind of history' based on three 'ideas' or aims: to present 'a problem-oriented analytical history' in place of the 'traditional narrative of events'; to examine 'the whole range of human activities' rather than focus on 'political history'; and, in order to achieve the first two aims, to collaborate with other intellectual disciplines, notably geography, psychology, sociology, economics, linguistics, and anthropology.⁴³ The journal has had three different titles since its launch in 1929, and its three aims summarised above may be best symbolised in the title employed since 1946: *Annales économies, sociétés, civilisations*.⁴⁴

The *Annales* movement may be divided into three phases. In the first phase — from the 1920s to 1945 — it was 'small, radical and subversive, fighting a guerrilla action' against traditional, political history, which I have already described in this chapter. After World War II the movement achieved the status of 'historical establishment' and established itself 'most truly' as 'a "school" with distinctive concepts (notably "*structure*" and "*conjoncture*") and distinctive methods (notably the "serial history" of changes over the long term). In the third phase — from around 1968 to today — in France the influence of the movement was 'so great that it had lost much of its former distinctiveness', while 'in the eyes of its foreign admirers' the *Annales* movement remained a distinctive school.⁴⁵ Revisionism emerged in this intellectual environment.

⁴³ Peter Burke, *French Historical Revolution: The Annales School 1929–89* (Cambridge: Polity, 1990), p. 2.

⁴⁴ The other two titles were: *Annales d'histoire sociale* (1939–42 and 1945) and *Mélanges d'histoire sociale* (1942–4). See Burke, p. 117, n. 2.

⁴⁵ Peter Burke, p. 2. See also François Dosse, *L'histoire en mirrtes: Des 'Annales' à la 'nouvelle histoire'* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 1987); translated under the title *New History in France: The Triumph of the Annales*, trans. by Peter V. Conroy, Jr. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

IV. From *Biographical Studies* to *Recusant History*

The revisionist emphasis on the laity's resistance to the Reformation did not emerge out of nowhere. It was not a coincidence that the birth of revisionism followed the launch of 'a periodical that would lay the foundations of a general history of Catholicism in these [British] islands since the Reformation'.⁴⁶ In 1951 two bibliographers at the British Museum and the Bodleian Library, Anthony F. Allison and David M. Rogers launched *Biographical Studies 1534–1829*, which featured 'materials towards a biographical dictionary of Catholic history in the British Isles from the breach with Rome to Catholic Emancipation'. In the foreword to the first volume of the journal, Allison and Roger emphasised a need for the study of Catholic history:

A need has long been felt by those interested in the history of Catholicism in the British Isles since the Reformation, for carrying a stage further the labours of earlier scholars.⁴⁷

Their aim, however, was not to study the history of Catholicism in general but to 'repair, by gradual stages, some of the omissions and errors' in such previous biographical publications as Henry Foley's *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus*, Joseph Gillow's *A Literary and Biographical History: Or Bibliographical Dictionary of the English Catholics* and the *Dictionary of National Biography*. The object of *Biographical Studies* was to provide the means by which the researches of many individual scholars could gradually be assembled and presented

⁴⁶ A[nthony] F. Allison Allison and D[avid] M. Rogers, 'Ten Years of Recusant History', *Recusant History* 6 (1961), 2–11 (p. 2).

⁴⁷ Allison and Rogers, 'Foreword', *Biographical Studies 1534–1829* 1 (1951), 2–3 (p. 2).

for general use.⁴⁸ The journal was to be published twice a year (in January and July), and each issue would contain approximately eighty pages.⁴⁹

Biographical Studies attracted historians of the English Reformation. The editors of the journal revealed that ‘articles of merit’ had been submitted to the journal ‘which were not solely biographical in content’. It soon became apparent that insistence on the original object would require the journal to exclude valuable work in the field of Recusant history. Accordingly, the editor began to publish research on any aspect of Recusant history, and in 1957 — six years after the launch of the *Biographical Studies 1534–1829* — the journal was renamed *Recusant History*.⁵⁰

By 1958 the journal was occupied with studies of recusancy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The editor predicted that this tendency was likely to remain for some time.⁵¹ Their prediction was accurate; until very recently, the history of English Catholicism in the sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries had been dominated by that of recusancy. The edited volumes of primary sources and the monograph series — the ‘records series’ — published by the Catholic Record Society ‘manifest a “recusant” bias’.⁵² ‘The persisting tendency to equate Catholicism and recusancy’ during this period was also reflected in the title of the series of facsimile editions of Catholic writings between 1558 and 1640: *English Recusant Literature* (1968–79).⁵³ We can identify this tendency, as we shall shortly see, in Haigh’s studies

⁴⁸ Allison and Rogers, ‘Foreword’, 2; Allison and Rogers, ‘Editor’s [sic] Note: The Change of Titles’, *Recusants History* 4 (1957), 2. Foley’s work was published in 1875–83, and Gillow’s in 1885–1902. Allison and Rogers, ‘Editor’s [sic] Note: The Change of Titles’, 2.

⁴⁹ Allison and Rogers, ‘Foreword’, 3. From 1956 the journal was published three times a year (Allison and Rogers, ‘Editors’ Note’, *Biographical Studies 1534–1829* 1 (1956), 68.

⁵⁰ Allison and Rogers, ‘Ten Years of Recusant History’, 2; Allison and Rogers, ‘Editor’s [sic] Note: The Change of Title’, 2.

⁵¹ Quoted in Allison and Rogers, ‘Ten Years of Recusant History’, 10. The editors noted in 1961 that they were quoting the passage from their editorial note published in 1958, but I could not find it in the editorial note in the question.

⁵² *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England*, Royal Historical Society Studies in History 68 (London: Boydell for Royal Historical Society, 1993; repr. Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999), pp. 5–6, n. 1.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 5–6, n. 1.

of the continuity of Catholicism. The preoccupation with recusancy in the historiography of the English Reformation has been reflected in biographical studies of Shakespeare, as I indicate below.

Christopher Haigh

In 1961 Allison and Rogers emphasised the importance of regional studies:

Since the principal sources for this kind of local history [i.e., Recusant families and communities] are to be found to a large extent in local archives, this is a branch of Recusant studies which should increasingly appeal to those who have an interest in the Catholic past of their own areas, and live within reach of county and diocesan record offices. [. . .] Should the local history of Recusant families and groups and of the local organization of missionary activities gradually be taken over by county Recusant societies, there would remain nevertheless a range of subjects which we consider mainly the concern of *Recusant History*.⁵⁴

One of the finest regional studies of the English Reformation is Christopher Haigh's *Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Lancashire* (1975).

Haigh's study of Lancashire may have been an encouragement for the 'Lancastrians' to Catholicise Shakespeare. 'It seemed to me in 1971', Haigh later wrote, 'that the story of the reformers and victors is only part of proper Reformation history; I hoped to add the resisters and the losers, and those who just watched it all happen. I wanted to construct a version of the English Reformation which integrated the dynamic of high politics with the variety of local responses'.⁵⁵ Four years later he published his *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire*. This book was Haigh's 'attempt to test some of the suggested explanations of the origins and course of the English Reformation by a consideration of one county outside the orbit of the capital and the universities, and to relate religious change to social, economic and political influences'.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Allison and Rogers, 'Ten Years of Recusant History', 7.

⁵⁵ *English Reformations*, p. vii.

⁵⁶ *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. vii.

Haigh utterly discredited a 'rapid Reformation from below' by challenging two assumptions upon which it had been based. Dickens regarded anti-clericalism in the sixteenth century as one of the foundations of the spread of Protestantism among the laity. He assumed that the beliefs and personnel of the English Catholic Church did not satisfy the need of the laity, who were therefore open to the influence of alternative ideas of Lollardy and Protestantism. Haigh, on the other hand, presented a laity in accord with their clergy.

Haigh claimed that '[v]iolent words and actions against priests are not necessarily examples of the "anti-clericalism" historians find so convenient a concept', and that there was 'no evidence that laymen attacked clergy *qua* clergy'. He argued that priests were attacked because they were often involved in secular conflicts over fees and dues. Since parish churches were 'the centre of all official activity', and church buildings were used for many secular purposes, they were 'regarded with no special awe'. If the laity did not respect church buildings, 'the same was true of the priests who staffed them'.⁵⁷ In addition, Haigh claimed that Dickens had failed to distinguish 'anticlericalism (hatred of priests) and opposition to the Church courts (hatred of authority)'.⁵⁸ Haigh showed that Lancashire men were violent towards not only priests but also others.⁵⁹ There is 'no evidence that the ecclesiastical courts occasioned any more resistance than the secular [. . .]' The laity were 'irritated by the Church's courts and the Church's taxes', and they 'might break the Church's laws and evade the duties they owed it'. But 'only rarely did they flout its authority since it alone held the keys of heaven'.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 55–7.

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 61–2 (p. 61).

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 46–54.

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 61–2.

Dickens's portrayal of a 'rapid Reformation below' was also based on the assumption that Catholicism was losing its hold on the laity. Haigh, on the contrary, argued that in Lancashire pre-Reformation Catholicism was still strong, and that 'the early sixteenth century found the old Church not at its nadir but at its high point'.⁶¹ The county was not 'the sort of seed-bed' in which new religion could easily grow.⁶² Protestantism was thus able to make few converts, and resistance to the government's imposition of reform continued well into Elizabeth's reign and beyond. The laity regarded liturgical activities as a valuable part of their religious life. 'There is little sign, it is true, of a deep spiritual life, but there was a certainly a real enthusiasm for traditional practices', and pre-Reformation Catholicism played 'a central role in the life of the community'.⁶³

'The most distinct feature of popular religion', Haigh argued, was 'its preoccupation with death and the ensuring of salvation' through prayers. Although prayers for the dead fell into disrepute elsewhere and injunctions forbade them, they remained common practices in Lancashire well into the reign of Elizabeth. The payment to priests for prayers made clerical life more attractive, and the number of men willing to enter the service of the Church increased until the suppression of the monasteries. Increasing wealth in the reign of Henry VIII made it possible for people in Lancashire not only to secure prayers for their souls but also to provide endowments of chantries. Such endowment on a large scale was no longer common in the south, but in Lancashire massive sums were invested for the establishment of a

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 63–4.

⁶² Ibid., p. 92.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 63–4 and 66–7.

large number of chantries.⁶⁴ Haigh recognised the Pilgrimage of Grace as a protest against royal assault on the monks and a defence of the monasteries.⁶⁵

Haigh discredited the impact of Lollardy on the laity, which Dickens and others regarded as a foundation stone of the English Reformation. The reason that Lancashire was not penetrated by Lollardy was a 'simple geographical one': it was 'at the opposite corner of England from the old Lollard centres, and contact between the two was disrupted by the Derbyshire Peaks and the Pennine chain'.⁶⁶ Lancashire 'had no history of Lollardy and little sign of anticlericalism, and popular religion was flowering into new life rather than decaying'. The laity thus 'reacted to the Henrician reformation by rebellion'.⁶⁷

Although the Edwardian Reformation was much more vigorously Protestant than the Henrician Reformation, it achieved little success in Lancashire. There was fear among the laity and the clergy in the shire, who equally found the government's attempt to suppress the chantries a severe threat to their religious life. The statute of 1547 ordered the dissolution of chantries because superstition and errors had resulted from 'vain opinions of purgatory and masses satisfactory',⁶⁸ and Dickens had suggested that few still accepted the orthodox doctrine.⁶⁹ Haigh, on the other hand, argued that people in Lancashire found the implications of the legislation 'horrifying', for in the county a number of chantries were founded until just before the statute was issued, and other methods of providing prayers for the dead remained popular practices. For the same reason, the confiscation of liturgical items belonging to chantries and free chapels, too, met with little success. To make matters worse, the

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 67–75.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 116–38.

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 79–82 and 87–8 (p. 80).

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 117. See also Haigh, *The Last Days of the Lancashire Monasteries and the Pilgrimage of Grace*, Remains Historical and Literary Connected with the Palatine Counties of Lancashire and Chester, 3rd Series, 17 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1969).

⁶⁸ Quoted in Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire*, p. 146.

⁶⁹ *English Reformation*, pp. 207 and 211.

chantry and stipendiary priests formed almost a quarter of the whole clergy of the county, and in an area already short of priests the suppression of chantries as well as monasteries only led patrons, priests and local sympathisers to 'evasive action'. Even when the suppression of chantries succeeded, most priests continued to serve in their old parishes, providing prayers for the dead. 'The confiscation of chalices, vestments and other church goods in 1553 was equally offensive, for either they had been hallowed by use in the mass or they had been purchased only recently', and there was no sign of enthusiasm to follow the Council's instructions. Although confiscated valuables should have been dispatched to London at the beginning of 1553, they had not left the county by Edward's death in July.⁷⁰

In Lancashire the administrative institutions both lay and clerical were weak and not entirely reliable. Among the ecclesiastical commissioners and justices of the peace there were few with sympathies for the new religion. 'With officers such as these, the 1559 settlement can have been enforced only tardily'. Some of the clergy refused to subscribe to the settlement, but 'many of those who took the oath did so less than enthusiastically', and '[d]espite the massive withdrawal of conservatives', there remained within the Church 'a considerable body of traditionalist opinion' and 'the cautious, if not lax, approach of local ecclesiastical and lay authorities allowed the public provision in the churches of some semblance of Catholicism'.⁷¹

So many of the parish clergy were crypto-Catholics that 'the letter and spirit of the settlement of 1559 were disregarded and even the celebration of public and private masses could not be prevented'. Where the mass was not celebrated, prayer book services were altered to meet Catholic tastes, and other sentiments and practices of

⁷⁰ Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire*, pp. 146–51.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 209–24.

popular Catholicism were intruded into the churches.⁷² Removal of images and furniture for Catholic ceremonies was slow and unpopular.⁷³

In Haigh's view, the impact of the Henrician and Edwardian Reformations was limited 'at the grass-roots level'. It 'ought not, then, to be surprising', Haigh suggested, 'if the later ecclesiastical history of Lancashire does not quite fit into the traditional Elizabethan framework of Protestant triumph and Catholic humiliation'.⁷⁴ During the first decade of Elizabeth's reign, Lancashire acquired 'the reputation for a more vigorous resistance to official attempts to impose the new religion than any other county in England'. In 1567–8 there were fears of a Catholic rebellion in Lancashire, and in 1570 there were rumours of a Spanish invasion associated with rebels in the county. In 1568 Elizabeth herself complained of Catholic opposition in Lancashire 'as we hear not of the like in any other parts'. The Privy Council reported in 1574 that the county was 'the very sink of popery, where more unlawful acts have been committed and more unlawful persons holden secret than in any other part of the realm'.⁷⁵ Between 1563 and 1605 visitations took place in Lancashire with impressive frequency, but 'frequency did not necessarily mean that discipline was any more effective', for the county lacked the visitation and control mechanism of the Church and state — effective administration, the thoroughness of the visit, the cooperation of parish officers and the willingness to accept the new church discipline — on which discipline at the local level would have depended.⁷⁶

The 1571 visitation revealed 'a widespread, well-established Catholic religious life' in Lancashire; recusants certainly existed, and many others 'were moving

⁷² Ibid., pp. 217–9.

⁷³ Ibid., pp. 219–20.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 209.

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 222–4.

⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 225–46, 265–6 and 285–91.

towards the same stand'. There was a massive withdrawal of priests from the churches. Many of the withdrawn clergy became active recusant priests instead of reverting to secular occupations, and the number of those active in Lancashire grew rapidly. Haigh argued that it was this early existence of a large body of recusant clergy, not missionaries, which led to the creation of lay recusancy in the county.

Throughout the 1570s the recusant priests provided Catholic services for the laity.⁷⁷ Aveling and Bossy regarded English recusants as a new Catholic community created by the seminarians.⁷⁸ Haigh, on the other hand, recognised that in Lancashire recusancy existed on a considerable scale by the middle of 1578. He thus concluded that widespread recusancy in Lancashire could not have been the work of the seminarians, and instead emphasised the importance of Catholic clergy: it was local Catholic clergy who laid 'the foundations for a vigorous recusant community before the arrival of the seminary priests'.⁷⁹

The recusant clergy laid 'the foundations' of 'thorough-going Catholicism' early in the reign of Elizabeth. By the end of the reign over 750 recusants were identified in Lancashire.⁸⁰ Haigh emphasised that this was merely the number of *detected* or *known* recusants, and suggested that in the county which lacked an effective visitation mechanism the actual number of recusants must have been larger.

⁷⁷ By 1563 both the Inquisition at Rome and a committee of the Council of Trent had ruled that in no circumstances was it lawful for English Catholics to attend the services of the Church of England. Three years later Laurence Vaux, a warden of Manchester under Mary Tudor, had an audience with the Pope in Rome and was commissioned by Drs Nicholas Sander and Thomas Harding, the papal commissaries for the enforcement of the decrees in England, to act as their deputy. Vaux spread Rome's views on church attendance in Lancashire. Vaux's labour as a recusant priest produced so great an effect among the recusant gentry that the Ecclesiastical commissions feared that 'this confederacy [. . .] will grow to a commotion or rebellion' and that 'all but one of the gentry along the south-west Lancashire coast had joined the recusant faction' (Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire*, pp. 249–50 and 266).

⁷⁸ John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community 1570–1850* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1975).

⁷⁹ *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire*, pp. 247–68.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 269. The number of recusants dramatically increased (reaching over 3,500) after the accession of James I (p. 269). Haigh has argued that this was because those who had been non-communicants became recusants when it was widely expected that James would grant toleration (p. 277).

He asserted that the county was ‘more solidly recusant than [. . .] it would appear to have been.’⁸¹ In addition, nearly 350 non-communicants were identified at the same time. Moreover, the core of Lancashire recusancy, Haigh argued, ‘was surrounded by a fluctuating body of “temporisers”, church-papists, non-communicants and fair-weather Catholics’. He suggested that this non-recusant Catholicism still existed on a considerable scale late in the reign of Elizabeth. At the end of the reign, Haigh asserted, Lancashire was ‘by far the most Catholic county in England’.⁸²

Haigh stressed the continuity of Catholicism in Lancashire: ‘the Catholic tradition of the county had never been broken, but had been kept alive by the recusant clergy, so that the seminarians could build upon existing allegiances and did not have to create a whole new Catholic community’. He emphasised that in Lancashire the English Reformation proved to be a complete failure: ‘Reformation by official decree failed to destroy widespread popular Catholicism, while the unofficial Reformation of preachers and traders failed to capture more than one corner of the county’. Haigh further suggested a ‘possibility that Lancashire was not an exception, merely an extreme case of what existed elsewhere, a sizeable, if largely undetected, recusant population’.⁸³

Haigh’s view immediately received strong support from historians who dug into local records of various areas including Chichester, Ely, Lincoln, Norwich and

⁸¹ *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire*, pp. 271–3 (p. 273). Haigh reminds us that ‘[t]he conviction of a recusant required not simply that he be proved not to have attended his parish church, but that he had not attended *any* church’ (p. 271).

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 275–94. Haigh has suggested that there was ‘no sharp dividing line between recusants and church-papists’ because those who were non-communicants in the reign of Elizabeth became recusants after the accession of James I, and when recusants conformed by attending church, they often refused to take communion (pp. 277–8). Cf. Alexander Walsham, *Church Papists*, *passim*.

⁸³ Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire*, pp. 278, 332, 267.

Winchester.⁸⁴ These local studies demonstrated that there was ‘surprisingly little solid evidence of conflict between clergy and laity’. They led him to a conclusion that ‘a picture of the Church as a moribund, dispirited and repressive structure which failed to meet the needs of its people’ was difficult to sustain. The ‘faults’ of the late-medieval Church which Dickens had presented as proofs of decline of Catholicism in localities were far less significant than suggested. Since the situation in England did not produce sharp lay hostility towards the clergy, Haigh recognised in the early Tudor period no ‘breach in lay-clerical relations necessary to a “rapid Reformation from below”’.⁸⁵

Other regional studies — including Sussex, Cheshire, Lincolnshire, Worcestershire, Hampshire and Essex — have reinforced Haigh’s emphasis on the organic continuity of Catholicism in the English Reformation and allowed him to assert that recusancy was well established before the arrival of the seminary priests.⁸⁶ He corrected Dickens’s study of the diocese of York by pointing out that new studies

⁸⁴ Haigh, ‘Some Aspects of the Recent Historiography of the English Reformation’, p. 92. For the local studies, see Stephen Lander, ‘Church Courts and the Reformation in the Diocese of Chichester, 1500–1558’, in *Continuity and Change: Personnel and Administration of the Church in England, 1500–1642*, ed. by Rosemary O’Day and Felicity Heal (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1976), pp. 215–37 (especially pp. 219–28 and 235–6); Felicity Heal, ‘The Parish Clergy and the Reformation in the Diocese of Ely’, *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society* 66 (1975), 141–63 (especially pp. 147–50); Margaret Bowker, *Secular Clergy in the Diocese of Lincoln 1495–1520* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 18–20, 33 and 36; Houlbrooke, *Church Courts and the People during the English Reformation 1520–1570*, pp. 10–1.

⁸⁵ Haigh, ‘Some Aspects of the Recent Historiography of the English Reformation’, pp. 92–4.

⁸⁶ Haigh, ‘The Continuity of Catholicism in the English Reformation’, *Past and Present* 93 (1981), 37–69, especially 39ff. Roger B. Manning, *Religion and Society in Elizabethan Sussex: a Study of the Enforcement of the Religious Settlement, 1558–1603* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1969); Henry Norbert Birt, *Elizabethan Religious Settlement: a Study of Contemporary Documents* (London: G. Bell, 1907); Keith Robert Wark, *Elizabethan Recusancy in Cheshire*, Chetham Society Publications, Remains Historical and Literary Connected with the Palatine Counties of Lancaster and Chester, 3rd Series, 19 (Manchester: Manchester University Press for Chetham Society, 1971); Houlbrooke, *Church Courts and the People during the English Reformation, 1520–1570*; John Edward Paul, ‘The Hampshire Recusants in the Reign of Elizabeth I’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Southampton, 1958). For Worcestershire and Essex, Haigh lists: Vincent Burke, ‘Catholic Recusants in Elizabethan Worcestershire’ (unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1972); Michael O’Dwyer, ‘Catholic Recusants in Essex, c. 1580 to c. 1600’ (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of London, 1960).

demonstrated that recusancy was well established before ‘survivalism’ died out.⁸⁷ He also drew attention to the objective of the seminary priests and the Jesuits: the preservation and care of *pre-existing* Catholics.

The English mission, if indeed ‘mission’ is an appropriate term, was not an evangelical movement but a pastoral organization: its objective was not the conversion of heretics but the care of Catholics. [. . .] Allen, Baker, [John] Gerard and Parsons make it clear that the task of missionaries was the reconciliation of schismatics, the turning of already-Catholic church-papists into recusants, rather than the conversion of heretics. [. . .] The 1580 instructions for the Jesuit mission forbade the priests to approach heretics, encouraged them to deal with reconciled Catholics whenever possible and stressed that their aim was ‘the preservation and augmentation of the faith of the Catholics of England’.⁸⁸

They were sent not to create a new Catholic body but to provide pre-existing Catholics with pastoral care. In addition, Haigh challenged Bossy’s emphasis on the discontinuity of pre- and post-Reformation Catholicism. He pointed out that there was ‘a reasonably close geographical correspondence between the areas of marked “survivalism” and those of densest recusancy’ while there was no close relationship ‘between the distribution of priests and that of recusants which would have existed if the mission had built a new Catholic community or had been decisive in altering the form of Catholicism from “survivalism” and church-papistry to recusancy’.⁸⁹

J. J. Scarisbrick

In the 1980s revisionism received strong reinforcement from J. J. Scarisbrick. The opening of his *The Reformation and the English People* (1984) conveys the very theme of revisionism: ‘on the whole, English men and women did not want the

⁸⁷ ‘The Continuity of Catholicism in the English Reformation’, 41ff. J. C. H. Aveling, *Northern Catholics: the Catholic Recusants of the North Riding of Yorkshire, 1558-1790* (London: Chapman, 1966); Aveling, *The Catholic Recusants of the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1558-1790*, Proceedings of Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society 10 (Leeds: Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society, 1963); Aveling, *Catholic Recusancy in the City of York, 1558-1791*, Catholic Record Society Monograph Series 2 (London: Catholic Record Society, 1970). See also ‘Diocesan Return of Recusants for England and Wales, 1577’, ed. by Patrick Ryan, in *Catholic Record Society Miscellanea XII*, Catholic Record Society Publications 22 (London: Catholic Record Society, 1921), pp. 1-114.

⁸⁸ ‘The Continuity of Catholicism in the English Reformation’, 55-6.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 42-3 and 58 (pp. 42 and 58).

Reformation and most of them were slow to accept it when it came'.⁹⁰ He challenged the orthodoxy:

The English Reformation was only in a limited sense popular and from 'below'. To speak of a rising groundswell of lay discontent with the old order, of growing 'spiritual thirst' during the later Middle Ages, and of a momentous alliance between the crown and disenchanted layfolk that led to the repudiation of Rome and the humbling of the clerical estate is to employ metaphors for which there is not much evidence.⁹¹

Scarisbrick's view of the English Reformation clearly countered those presented by Dickens and Cross, who presented the English Reformation as the achievement of the laity.

Scarisbrick, analysing over 2,500 wills of late medieval lay people for their religious views, found frequent requests that friars should attend the funerals of testators and a significant number of gifts that they poured into parish churches.⁹² Moreover, these wills revealed lay people's 'intense preoccupation with expiatory bequests', which resulted in masses and prayers for the souls of the benefactors. 'Through the 1530s and 1540s the overwhelming majority of people were still pouring bequests into the old religion'.⁹³ Scarisbrick suggested that these bequests revealed that the laity 'accepted the efficacy of the mass, prayer for the dead, the usefulness of veneration of saints and the numerous other ways of intercession and expiation which bequests to altars, lights, organs, church-building and so on afforded'.⁹⁴

Scarisbrick also argued that the importance of pre-Reformation Catholicism in the religious life of the laity was reflected in the role of fraternities (also known as confraternities or religious guilds). A fraternity was 'an association of layfolk who, under the patronage of a particular saint, the Trinity, Blessed Virgin Mary, Corpus Christi or similar, undertook to provide the individual member of the brotherhood

⁹⁰ J. J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), p. 1.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 3. The majority of the wills he examined come from the Midlands.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 4–6.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12 (p. 12).

with a good funeral [. . .] together with regular prayer and mass saying thereafter for the repose of the dead person's soul'.

Living members were required to come together on the patronal feast day for a special mass for past and present brothers and sisters, at the altar or in the chapel (which might be a free-standing one) belonging to the fraternity, when candles galore might burn, the sacred plate and vestments of the guild be brought out and its livery (if it had risen to such heights) worn.⁹⁵

Fraternities were thus middling people's equivalent to chantries. In addition, they were 'inseparably connected' with the doctrine of Purgatory and the idea of satisfaction for sin, the sacrificial efficacy of the mass, veneration of saints, and intercession to Mary. These were their 'fundamental *raisons d'être*'. They were run by the laity. Although there were often local clergy among the members, they almost never held office. The guild clergy were appointed and paid by their lay masters. There was 'no sign of mounting tension between lay and clerical estates'.⁹⁶

Scarisbrick emphasised that fraternities remained an essential part of lay religious life until the chantries act of 1547. Many people belonged to more than one fraternity, and there were hundreds of them in England. Their astonishing number and popularity illustrates 'the apparent stability of and lay accord with the old ecclesiastical order'.⁹⁷ The laity was endowing the traditional structures right up to the moment when they were abolished by the government. Scarisbrick has argued that because 'people tend not to invest in things which are thought to be threatened with imminent liquidation', there was 'little apprehension that these institutions were about to collapse'.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 20.

⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 20–4. Eamon Duffy, another revisionist, discusses the role and importance of fraternities (see *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 141–54).

⁹⁷ Scarisbrick, pp. 15 and 28–38 (p. 15).

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 12.

Scarisbrick argued that the wills he had examined demonstrated the lay people's devotion to Catholicism. He thus concluded that the English people did not wish any attacks on the church.

I am not saying that all was well. I am not claiming that pre-Reformation England was a land of zealous, God-fearing Christians [. . .] I am saying that, however imperfect the old order, and however imperfect the Christianity of the average man and woman in the street, there is no evidence of loss of confidence in the old ways, no mass disenchantment.⁹⁹

Although lay people were not permitted to take active roles in public worship, they were intimately engaged in the liturgical and communal life of their local church.¹⁰⁰

The parish church 'would have been the object of local pride and a symbol of a community's integrity, continuity and wealth'. There was 'a partnership between layman and cleric — or [. . .] a symbiosis'. Although there were abuses, lay people's hostility — what Dickens had seen as 'anti-clericalism' — was directed towards individuals, not towards the Catholic church as a religious institution.¹⁰¹

Scarisbrick emphasised that there was little sign of growing lay hostility towards pre-Reformation Catholicism. 'England could not match the bitter and violent anti-clericalism that was to be found on the Continent [. . .] on the eve of the Reformation'. English people did not look for reform; the English Reformation was imposed by the government on the laity. The English Reformation 'came primarily from "above", that is, from monarch, ministers and some leading ecclesiastics, rather than from a groundswell of popular discontent and resentment towards the old religion'.¹⁰² Scarisbrick's argument was that the religious changes of the sixteenth century were 'acquiesced in and accepted by the English laity rather than initiated or promoted by them'. He did not deny that 'these changes could not have been carried

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 43–5.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 3, 24, and 45–6. O'Day questions Scarisbrick's methodology (and consequently his conclusion). See her discussion in *The Debate on the English Reformation*, pp. 156–9.

¹⁰² Scarisbrick, pp. 15–6 and 48.

through without some cooperation from “below”, but he emphasised that the initiative drive and organisation came primarily from above.¹⁰³

In Scarisbrick’s view, it was Henry VIII who wanted reform.¹⁰⁴ The laity eventually accepted the Reformation because some misunderstood the crown’s intention; they thought that religious houses were to be converted or reconstituted to new, primarily religious ends rather than destroyed. But ‘[m]ost lay people acquiesced in the Reformation because they hardly knew what was going on’ and were ‘reluctant to jeopardise life or limb, a career or the family’s good name’ — so they accepted reformation ‘as everyone else did’. By the late 1530s English people acquiesced in the Reformation ‘not because they had been pining to do so for years but because it had suddenly become mentally and psychologically possible to do so’.¹⁰⁵

The act of 1547 brought about the dissolution of free chapels, guilds and chantries. Since most guilds and chantries were located inside parish churches, their dissolution ‘prepared the way for the next phase, namely, the purging of parish churches of their Catholic furnishings, their high altars and remaining side altars, their statues, wall-paintings, holy water stoups, and so on’. Finally in 1553 the government began to strip parish churches of their remaining treasure, ‘leaving every church with the bare minimum of plate for the new, simple communion service and a sufficient number of surplices and other cloth’. Yet, Scarisbrick argued, up to the moment when guilds, chantries and chapels were despoiled, ‘there was little disenchantment with or active hostility’ towards them, and ‘these decades showed little sign of spontaneous popular iconoclasm’.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 61.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 61–2.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., pp. 77–82.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 85–90.

Scarisbrick also asserted that the laity accepted the Reformation as they saw it as an opportunity for their personal gain. According to Scarisbrick, churchwardens' accounts reveal that altars, roods and rood lofts, statues, holy-water stoups and other Catholic furniture were taken down in Edward's reign, put back in Mary's and taken down again after Elizabeth's accession 'without great drama or disorder', and that there were frequent payments for taking down and putting back these furnishings. Some of the furniture and furnishings sold to local people in Edward's reign turned up again, safe and sound, in Mary's. Scarisbrick pointed out:

A striking thing about these incidents is that the items concerned were still to hand and worth buying back. [. . .] Though it was three or four years since that rood loft had come down, the timber was apparently still intact and ready to be put back. So were the statutes.¹⁰⁷

These incidents reveal that 'what initially looks like unblushing spoliation by parishioners may sometimes have been nothing of the sort'. The explanation for this 'may partly be that consciences had been stirred, or perhaps [that] some of the sales [. . .] were prompted by a need for cash'. Scarisbrick thus suggested that 'the opportunity generated the appetite'.¹⁰⁸

Scarisbrick admitted that England was 'sufficiently "Protestant" in 1559 to produce a Parliament that agreed to the two foundation statutes of the restored, Protestant Church of England', and 'thereafter to enable the Elizabethan Settlement to "settle"'.¹⁰⁹ But he underscored that recusancy 'increased in strength and confidence' during the 1570s, and stressed 'the contribution of the so-called Marian priests to the story of post-Reformation Catholicism ("so-called" because many of them [. . .] were in fact ordained before Mary's time)': they played a crucial part 'in sustaining the old

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 102.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., pp. 89–90, 101–3, and 107–8.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 162.

faith through Elizabeth's reign — indeed beyond'. Scarisbrick described them as 'pioneers in the work of sustaining the officially proscribed creed'.¹¹⁰

Marian priests set up as chaplains in gentry houses and as tutors to the children. Some stumped the highways and byways from one mass-centre to another, itinerant and fugitive. Many of the houses [. . .] which were later famous for the seminary or Jesuit priests whom they entertained had previously been, and continued to be, served by Marians. Like the later clergy they were sometimes imprisoned and even martyred. They worked closely with the new clergy from the Continent [. . .]¹¹¹

Scarisbrick emphasised, as did Haigh, that the increase in 'popish nonconformity' was already under way before the first arrival of seminary priests. Although he admitted that it was difficult not to see the arrival of missionary priests 'as anything but a powerful transfusion of new life and confidence into the Catholic community', Scarisbrick nevertheless insisted that Marian clergy 'had laid the foundations of the Catholic mission'.¹¹²

Although Marian clergy played a crucial role in the survival of Catholicism in Elizabethan England, Scarisbrick stressed the vital involvement of the laity:

The survival of the old faith would have been impossible without the country houses which acted as mass-centres, created communities of Catholics consisting of families, servants and dependants, and sheltered priests and tutors, chaplains or itinerant missionaries smuggled in or hidden from ransacking pursuivants, and sent on to their next destination with food, money and possibly escort. The laity nourished and protected their clergy.¹¹³

Even missionary priests relied on support from the laity. Not only did the laity provide shelter, but they also established a network to collect funding for the English seminaries and religious houses being set up on the Continent. They 'sometimes rearranged their landed possessions to enable missionaries to go on their rounds without passing outside Catholic "territory"'.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, Scarisbrick argued that women played 'a conspicuous part in sustaining recusancy' 'partly because

¹¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 136–42 and 147.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 142.

¹¹² Ibid., pp. 143–7. See also Diarmaid MacCulloch, 'Catholic and Puritan in Elizabethan Suffolk: A County Community Pollarises', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 72 (1981), 232–87

¹¹³ Scarisbrick, p. 149.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 149–50 and 157.

“household” Catholicism gave them obvious importance, partly because their husband often conformed in order to save inheritances and careers, partly because they were less vulnerable to the law, partly because women are perhaps anyway more serious and responsive to religion’.¹¹⁵

Eamon Duffy

Scarisbrick, like Haigh, stressed the continuity between pre- and post-Reformation Catholicism. He emphasised that this continuity owed much to the laity who did not want any of the religious reforms. The revisionist perspective of the English Reformation was reinforced in the 1990s by Eamon Duffy’s magnificent analysis of lay religious beliefs and customs from the late Middle Ages.

In the first part of his *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580* (1992) Duffy revealed that the late medieval Church ‘exerted an enormously strong, diverse, and vigorous hold over the imagination and the loyalty of the people up to the very moment of [the] Reformation’ and showed no sign of exhaustion or decay.¹¹⁶ Duffy stressed its sociological element, suggesting that the cycle of fast and festival containing ‘ritual observance and symbolic gesture’ shaped lay people’s ‘perception of the world and their place in it’:

Within the liturgy birth, copulation, and death, journeying and homecoming, guilt and forgiveness, the blessing of homely things and the call to pass beyond them were all located, tested, and sanctioned. In the liturgy and in the sacramental celebrations which were its central moments, medieval people found the key to the meaning and purpose of their lives.¹¹⁷

It is a misconception, Duffy argued, that since it was in Latin the late medieval liturgy was ‘the preserve of the clergy, a complex and imperfectly intelligible spectacle’ in which the laity were ‘passive onlookers’. He asserted that the laity were, on the

¹¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 150–3. For the conflict between the secular priests and the Jesuits, see Scarisbrick, pp. 159–61, and Arnold Pritchard, *Catholic Loyalism in Elizabethan England* (London: Scolar; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), especially chapters 5–9.

¹¹⁶ Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 4.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 11.

contrary, intimately involved with the action and symbolism of the liturgy. Late medieval Catholicism permeated many aspects of their everyday life.¹¹⁸

Duffy emphasised ‘the interconnections between “élite” or clerical culture and that of the people at large’, arguing that ‘the liturgy was [. . .] the principal reservoir from which the religious paradigms and beliefs of the people were drawn’ and that ‘no substantial gulf existed between the religion of the clergy and the educated élite on the one hand and that of the people at large on the other’:

within the diversity of medieval religious options there was a remarkable degree of religious and imaginative homogeneity across the social spectrum, a shared repertoire of symbols, prayers, and beliefs which crossed and bridged even the gulf between the literate and the illiterate.¹¹⁹

He saw late medieval religion as ‘a single but multifaceted and resonant symbolic house, within which rich and poor, simple and sophisticate could kneel side by side, using the same prayers and sharing the same hope’.¹²⁰

Duffy cast new light on ‘the inwardness of late medieval lay piety’ by examining the primers often called in England Books of Hours.¹²¹ According to Duffy, by the dawn of the Reformation there were probably over 50,000 such books in circulation among the laity.¹²² Although the primers were regarded as ‘sacred objects, focuses of power’, they were books of prayers to be recited rather than simply to be contemplated. The range of material used in these prayer books was enormous. In essence, they were drawn largely from the Little Hours of the Virgin or the Office or the Dead. Although they were written in Latin, ignorance of Latin was not necessarily a complete barrier to understanding and use of the primers; evidence shows that

¹¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 11–5.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 3.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 298. For this reason Duffy rejected the term and notion of ‘popular religion’ — which presumes the ‘non-popular religion’ and the socio-cultural gap which Duffy rejected — in favour of ‘traditional religion’ (as in the subtitle of his book) in order ‘to indicate the general character of a religious culture which was rooted in a repertoire of inherited and shared beliefs and symbols, while remaining capable of enormous flexibility and variety’ (pp. 1–3).

¹²¹ Duffy, p. 209.

¹²² Ibid., pp. 7–8.

‘[m]uch of their contents, especially those liturgical or quasi-liturgical sections which made up their central core’, were familiar to the laity from hearing and recitation in the liturgy if not from reading.¹²³

In addition to recitation in the liturgy, Duffy illustrated a variety of ways in which the illiterate learned to understand their Latin primers. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries a good deal of vernacular ‘supplementary primer material’ became widely available both in verse and in prose, which enabled the laity to understand the primers more easily. Duffy also stressed the role of illustrations including the representations of saints in marginal or initial images: ‘[s]uch images helped [to] link the private prayer of the primer with the corporate worship of the parish church, where essentially the same images looked down from the windows, or flickered on pillar, tabernacle, and bracket in the candlelight maintained by the wills of fellow-parishioners and gild brothers or sisters’. Their functions were familiar to the laity at all social levels. In addition, the woodcut ‘made it possible for the first time to produce moderately priced but richly illustrated’ primers and to visualise the texts. Duffy insisted that ‘their mixture of traditional devotional and didactic imagery with innovative material and techniques, in particular their Renaissance style illustration, alongside an increased use of the vernacular, demonstrates the vitality of the traditional primer form and its ability to adapt to a changing religious market’. They were ‘direct and memorable in their impact on unlearned readers’. In this perspective, Duffy has argued, illustration represented ‘not superstition, a largely meaningless pejorative term, but lay Christianity’.¹²⁴

Some contents of the primers were also drawn from magical incantations based on invocations of God in his various names and ‘other exotic-sounding’ or

¹²³ Ibid., pp. 209–23.

¹²⁴ Ibid., pp. 223–31.

‘sacred’ names (including those of angels, legendary kings, the twelve apostles, and the four evangelists) as well as invocations of the cross and manual signs. This magical dimension of the primers was a manifestation of traditional religion ‘encompassing both clerical and lay devotion’.¹²⁵

The world-view they enshrined, in which humanity was beleaguered by hostile troops of devils seeking the destruction of body and soul, and to which the appropriate and guaranteed antidote was the incantatory or manual invocation of the cross or names of Christ, is not a construct of the folk imagination. Such ideas were built into the very structure of the liturgy, and formed the focus for some of its most solemn and popularly accessible moments.¹²⁶

Duffy has demonstrated this aspect — the mixture of magical prayers or charms and late medieval Christianity — in the Rogation processions, the administration of baptism and the blessings of salt and water every Sunday and of wax candles at Candlemas.¹²⁷

The second half of Duffy’s book presented his revisionist account of a slow Reformation from above. He described the Reformation as the government’s ‘destruction’ of the late medieval ‘symbolic world’.¹²⁸ But Duffy insisted that conservatism remained strong in the 1530s and beyond, and resistance to the government’s enforcement of religious reform was widespread. Into the 1530s, Duffy argued, ‘the vigour, richness, and creativity of late medieval religion was undiminished, and continued to hold the imagination and elicit the loyalty of the majority of the population’. Removal of images and furnishings in itself implied ‘nothing about the beliefs of clergy, wardens, or laity in the parishes’, and ‘we are not dealing here with mass evidence of spreading Protestant conviction’.¹²⁹ The reasons for the sales of religious items were, in most cases, practical — for example, ‘to solve

¹²⁵ Ibid., pp. 7–8, 217, 266–87.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 279.

¹²⁷ Ibid., pp. 279–82. As we shall see in chapter 6, the Rogation processions were suppressed in Edward’s reign, but they were retained in Elizabeth’s reign.

¹²⁸ Duffy, p. 1.

¹²⁹ Ibid., pp. 478–82 (pp. 479 and 481)

cash-flow problems during extensive building projects, or to meet emergency costs for repairs after accident or disaster'. The religious policies of Edward's regime also required large expenditure. To meet financial crises caused by the government's religious reforms, sales of valuables were inevitable in many parishes. In addition, many sales were already taking place in Henry's reign partly because 'the outlawing of the cult of the saints had rendered some objects redundant'. Although the scale of sales did increase during Edward's reign, parishioners purchased religious items for safe-keeping. Many parishes kept vessels and vestments necessary for the celebration of the mass and other Catholic ceremonies up to the very moment of confiscation, and they concealed images, liturgical books and relics, for example, behind walls and under the floor.¹³⁰

Dickens argued that disappearance of the mention of the saints in will preambles over the course of the sixteenth century revealed the disappearance of Catholic conviction.¹³¹ But Duffy warned that mid-Tudor wills ought to be handled with great care, for preambles simply declaring the testator's trust in the merits of Christ 'cannot be assumed to be Protestant or even "reformist"'. He argued that there was 'no theological reason why orthodox Catholics should not make increasing use of such formulas when, in the course of Reformation, it became expedient to do so':

The late medieval Christian was certainly encouraged to seek the support of the saints at the hour of death as in life. But, in the words of John Bossy, the believer 'knew who his saviour was', and was taught to place his trust first and foremost in the Passion of Christ. [. . .] As pressure mounted against traditional practice in late Henrician and Edwardian England, there were many reasons why Catholics might use such formulas, for which there was ample medieval precedent, and there were no theological objections to their doing so. [. . .] given the growing pressures against the expression of certain Catholic beliefs in wills in the 1540s and 1550s, we cannot simply assume that the absence of such bequests in wills with these preambles indicates Protestant conviction.¹³²

¹³⁰ Ibid., pp. 482–4 (pp. 483–4)

¹³¹ *The English Reformation*, pp. 214–5.

¹³² Duffy, pp. 507–8.

He criticised ‘historians seeking evidence of the advance of Protestant conviction’ in wills for ‘read[ing] these beliefs into, and not out of, will formulas’.¹³³

Duffy presented a variety of evidence for ‘a slow and reluctant conformity’ during the first decade of Elizabeth’s reign.¹³⁴ By the late 1560s Protestant diocesan authorities throughout the country were seriously worried by ‘the persistence of Catholic sentiment and practice’ and were making determined efforts to demolish what they called ‘monuments of superstition’ — (or what Duffy has described as) ‘the physical remnants of Catholic cult which represented both a symbolic focus for Catholic belief, a reminder of the community’s Catholic past and its corporate investment in the old religion, and a concrete hope for its ultimate restoration’. As Elizabethan authorities exerted themselves in parishes throughout England to impose reform once again, and the demolition of ‘the physical survival of Catholic cult’ advanced, the Elizabethan order was ‘slowly’ accepted, and the chances of a reversion to the pre-Reformation religious life faded. By the 1570s, Duffy argued, there was ‘a perceptible sense of changing of the guard, even in many traditionalist parishes’. By the end of the decade, ‘whatever the instincts and nostalgia of their seniors, a generation was growing up which had known nothing else, which believed the Pope to be Antichrist, the Mass a mummary, which did not look back to the Catholic past as their own [. . .]’ For Duffy, however, the Protestant victory in the 1580s was neither simple nor complete. The Reformation was ‘a stripping away of familiar and beloved observances, the destruction of a vast and resonant world of symbols which, despite the denials of the proponents of the new Gospel, they both understood and

¹³³ Ibid., p. 509.

¹³⁴ Ibid., pp. 570–9.

controlled'.¹³⁵ Duffy, like Haigh and Scarisbrick, concluded that the reform measures were imposed on the localities from above.¹³⁶

V. Revisionism and Shakespeare Biography

A series of events in historical studies during the 1950s and 1960s — Dickens's revolutionary methodology of regional studies, the launch of *Biographical Studies* (*Recusant History*) and the impact of the French *Annales* school — laid the foundation for revisionism. As Marshall asserts, it would be misleading to present revisionists as 'a unified, internally coherent historiographical "party"'. In fact, different views are possible 'on the extent to which traditional Catholic piety was to hold up under conditions of official disapproval'; some scholars have stressed its 'resilience', and others have insisted on its 'vulnerability and relatively rapid collapse'.¹³⁷ Yet, many biographers of Shakespeare appear to have neglected or to have been ignorant of them, and if we lay these (important) differences aside, there is no doubt, as we have seen in this chapter, that since the middle of the 1970s revisionists have cast strong doubt on the orthodoxy that the Reformation succeeded as a result of widespread discontent over the shortcomings of the Catholic Church and that the nation welcomed Protestantism with open arms. The revisionists have argued that there was no break in the continuity of Catholicism between the pre-Reformation period and Elizabeth's reign, and that reforms initiated by Henry, Edward and Elizabeth were resented in many parishes.

¹³⁵ Ibid., pp. 582–8 and 593 (pp. 582, 584, 586, 588 and 593).

¹³⁶ See also his local study of Morebath, *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation & Rebellion in an English Village* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001).

¹³⁷ Marshall, introduction to *The Impact of the English Reformation 1500–1640*, p. 2. See, for example, Robert Whiting, "'For the health of my soul': Prayers for the Dead in the Tudor South-west", *Southern History* 5 (1983), 68–94; Ronald Hutton, 'The Local Impact of the Tudor Reformations', in *The English Reformation Revised*, ed. by Christopher Haigh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 114–38; Christopher Haigh, 'The Church of England, the Catholics and the People, in *The Reign of Elizabeth I*, ed. by Christopher Haigh (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1984), pp. 195–219.

Revisionism, as we have seen, has modified Dickens's view of the English Reformation in the last three decades of the twentieth century. In 1984 Scarisbrick wrote:

Much of the flowering of recusant history (post-Reformation Catholic history) in recent decades has tended to show how tenacious and widespread was the survival of the old religion during and after Elizabeth's reign. It was not merely that Lancashire, much of Yorkshire and the north-east were steeped in recusant conservatism. Nonconformist popery was powerful in Northamptonshire and Hampshire ('Southamptonshire') Hereford and Worcester, much of Warwickshire [of interest to us], and some of Sussex. Even East Anglia and Essex showed signs of dogged allegiance to the old ways.¹³⁸

Towards the end of the twentieth century, Marshall, publishing a collection of essays on the English Reformation, observed that the revisionist 'perception that [. . .] the real impact of the English Reformation was "slow" rather than "rapid" is gradually winning wide acceptance'.¹³⁹ It is in this intellectual climate that the Catholicisation of Shakespeare has become a vogue in the late 20th century and after. New historicism drew Shakespeare biographers' attention to early modern England shortly after the 'flowering of recusant history'. Revisionism was therefore part of the intellectual discourse that Shakespeare biographers encountered in the late twentieth century. In this sense, we cannot deny that Shakespeare biography has been greatly influenced by the historiography of the English Reformation, and more precisely, that of revisionism. In this ideological matrix, Shakespeare has become a Catholic in the hands of some of his biographers.

Local studies of the north showing more resistance to the English Reformation than the south and east have presented a convenient background for the Lancastrian theories. The vogue of Catholicisation of Shakespeare at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, therefore, can be seen partly as an off-spring of revisionism in the study of the English Reformation.

¹³⁸ Scarisbrick, p. 137.

¹³⁹ Marshall, introduction to *The Impact of the English Reformation 1500–1640*, p. 4. A crucial question, of course, is: 'how slow was it?'

Catholicising Shakespeare: The Lancastrian Theories I From the 1920s to the 1970s

John Aubrey (1626–97), Nicholas Rowe (1674–1718), Edmond Malone (1741–1812), James Orchard Halliwell, later Halliwell-Phillipps (1820–89) and Sidney Lee (1859–1926) all provided their own portrayals of Shakespeare, which reflected their social and intellectual relationships with their ages.¹ In the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries there has been a distinctive movement, which none of these biographers in previous generations attempted, to *Catholicise* Shakespeare. The issue of the dramatist's religion itself is not new, and there have been critics in earlier periods who considered him Catholic. It was, however, a minority activity compared to the movement that started in the twentieth century and continues in the twenty-first century. My study of this vogue, it must be noted, does not assume that the dramatist was Catholic. *Catholicisation* of Shakespeare is a set of biographers' activities that derives from their *interpretation* of the evidence in order to identify Shakespeare's religion, and interpretation must be differentiated from *fact*.

¹ S. Schoenbaum, *Lives*, pp. 100–7, 129–43, 147–248, 396–432, 506–26; Robert Bearman, *Shakespeare in the Stratford Records* (Dover: Alan Sutton, 1994), pp. 60–75; Margareta de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim: The Reproduction of Authenticity and the 1790 Apparatus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991); James Boswell, 'A Biographical Memoir of Edmond Malone, Esq.', in *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare*, ed. by Edmond Malone and James Boswell, 21 vols (London: Rivington, 1821), I, pp. liii–lxxi; James Prior, *The Life of Edmond Malone, Editor of Shakespeare* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1860); J. K. Walton, 'Edmond Malone, An Irish Scholar', *Hermathena* 99 (1964), 5–26; Park Honan, *Shakespeare: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 415–24; Marvin Spevack, 'What Price Shakespeare?: James Orchard Halliwell-Phillips and the Shilling Shakespeares of the 1860s', *The Paper of the Bibliographical Society of America* 96 (2002), 23–47; Peter Holland, 'Some Accounts of the Life and Writings of Mr. William Shakespeare', *Twenty Minutes*, Radio 3, 20 April 2001; Holland, 'Shakespeare and *The DNB*', paper presented at the conference 'New Directions in Biographies of Shakespeare, Marlowe and Jonson' (organised by the Centre for the Study of the Renaissance, University of Warwick, held at Stratford-upon-Avon, 22–23 September 2001); Katherine Duncan-Jones, 'Why Have so Few Women Written about Shakespeare's Life?', paper presented at the conference 'Early Modern Lives: Biography and Autobiography in the Renaissance and the Seventeenth Century' (London, 28 June 2002).

At the core of the Catholicisation of Shakespeare biography lie the so-called Lancastrian theories: that Shakespeare spent time during his ‘lost years’ in Lancashire and that he is to be identified with ‘Will[i]am Shak[e]shafte’ in the will of the Catholic magnate, Alexander Houghton of Lea.² As we shall see shortly, the theories started without being concerned with Shakespeare’s possible Catholicism. This was because the identity of ‘Shakeshafte’ was one issue, and Shakespeare’s religion another. As the proponents (aptly called the ‘Lancastrians’) developed the theories, these two issues were blended. A recent biography by Anthony Holden claims that ‘[f]our hundred years on, it now seems clear that this “Shakeshafte” was in fact fifteen-year-old William Shakespeare’.³ His statement is misleading since it is not at all clear that Shakeshafte was our dramatist. Not only does the history of this identification go back for nearly eighty years, but it is more complicated than Holden suggests. Although the Lancastrians agree in terms of the identification of ‘Shakeshafte’ with Shakespeare, their supporting arguments vary and sometimes contradict each other. We have, therefore, Lancastrian theories (plural). In this chapter I shall examine the development of the theories and identify their problems and weaknesses.

I. The 1920s–30s: Discovery of ‘Will[i]am Shak[e]shafte’

E. K. Chambers

In 1923, Chambers found in *Lancashire and Cheshire Wills*, which Rev. G. J. Piccope edited for the Chetham Society in 1860, a will executed on 3 August 1581 by

² In the sixteenth century ‘Houghton’ was spelled ‘Houghton’ with a ‘u’, while it is now spelled without it.

³ Anthony Holden, *William Shakespeare: His Life and Work* (London: Little, Brown, 1999), p. 53. Shakespeare was seventeen, not fifteen, in 1581.

Alexander Hoghton of Lea in Lancashire, in which Hoghton referred to a servant named 'Will[i]am Shak[e]shaft[e]':

It[e]m yt ys my mynd & wyll that the said Thomas houghton of brynescoules my brother shall haue all my Instrument[es] belonginge to mewsyck[es], & all man[ner] of playe Clothes yf he be mynded to keppe & doe keppe playeres. And yf he wyll not keppe & manteyne player[es] Then yt ys my mynde & wyll that S[i]r Thomas Heskethe knyghte shall haue the same Instrument[es] & playe clothes. And I most hertelye Requyre the said S[i]r Thomas to be ffrendlye vnto ffoke gyllome & Will[i]am Shakshaft[e] nowe dwellynge w[i]th me & e[i]ther to take theym vnto his Seruyce or, els to helpe theym to some good m[aste]r as my tryste ys he wyll.⁴

The above passage in Hoghton's will makes three provisions: (1) Alexander's instruments and play-clothes are left to Thomas Hoghton (Alexander's half brother) if he keeps players; (2) they are to be passed to Sir Thomas Hesketh of Rufford, if Thomas Hoghton declines the bequest by failing to keep players;⁵ (3) Sir Thomas Hesketh is asked to employ Gyllome and Shakeshafte or to help them serve another master. Chambers wondered, 'Was then William Shakeshafte a player in 1581?' The citation and his comment appeared in his footnote as if to suggest that the information he found was only additional to his main research. It is essential to point out that at this point he did not attempt to make any connection between Shakeshafte and the dramatist.

Twenty one years later (1944) Chambers returned to Hoghton's will in his *Shakespearean Gleanings*, which included a short, yet important, section (five pages) entitled 'William Shakeshafte'. In 1930 Chambers had published *William*

⁴ Transcribed in David George, ed., *Lancashire*, Records of Early English Drama Series (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), p. 156. The will was proved on 12 September 1581. For the entire will in modernised spelling, see E. A. J. Honigmann's *Shakespeare: The 'Lost Years'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985; 2nd edn, 1998), pp. 135–8.

⁵ Sir Thomas Hesketh in Hoghton's will is Sir Thomas Hesketh of Rufford, not Thomas Hesketh of Gray's Inn, who was knighted 1603. Oliver Baker, though he acknowledges the difference, suggests that Shakeshafte may have been handed over to Thomas Hesketh of Gray's Inn. He claims that 'this would solve the mystery of his [Shakespeare's] obtaining an insight into legal technicalities'. Furthermore, he suggests that Thomas Hesketh of Gray's Inn may have taken Shakespeare to Gray's Inn as a student. See *In Shakespeare's Warwickshire and the Unknown Years* (London: Simpkin Marshall, 1937), pp. 308–10.

Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems in two volumes and listed eighty-three variants of Shakespeare's surname. In his 1944 *Shakespearean Gleanings* he regretted that he had not referred to Shakeshafte in his 1930 publication: 'I do not know why I did not refer again in my *William Shakespeare* (1930) to this William Shakeshafte [. . .], although I noted the numerous variations in the spelling of the name Shakespeare [. . .]'⁶ He added that the dramatist's grandfather, Richard, 'seems to be both Shakestaff and Shakeshafte, as well as Shakespere, Shakkespere, and Shaxpere, in the Snitterfield manor records'.⁷ Chambers thus conjectured that Shakespeare might have adopted the variant-surname 'Shakeshafte' as a player.⁸ But, as we shall shortly see, S. Schoenbaum later pointed out that Richard's family name was never spelled 'Shakeshafte' or 'Shakeshafte'.⁹

The major significance of Chambers's 1944 *Shakespearean Gleanings* was that he presented the external evidence that recorded connections not only between the Hoghtons and the Heskeths mentioned in the will of Alexander Hoghton, but also between these two households and the fourth and fifth earls of Derby. Chambers's source was F. R. Raines's transcription of *The Derby Household Books*, which recorded weekly expenses of Henry Stanley, fourth earl of Derby, at his houses at Knowsley, Lathom, and New Park in Lancashire. This record was kept by Henry's steward William Farington and accompanied by notes of the earl's visitors, among whom appear familiar names: Thomas Hoghton and Sir Thomas Hesketh.¹⁰

Chambers pointed out that Alexander Hoghton had been related to Sir Thomas Hesketh through his wife, Elizabeth, who was a daughter of Gabriel Hesketh of

⁶ *Shakespearean Gleanings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1944), p. 53.

⁷ This claim, however, was rejected by S. Schoenbaum in 1977. See section IV of this chapter.

⁸ *Shakespearean Gleanings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1944), p. 53.

⁹ See section IV.

¹⁰ Chambers notes that Alexander Hoghton was dead before the record begins.

Aughton, Lancashire, another branch of the Hesketh family. Sir Thomas visited Derby on 25 May and 30 December 1587. *The Derby Household Books* record: 'On Saturday S^r Tho. Hesketh, Players went awaie'. Because Farington's 'jottings are sometimes rough', Chambers wondered about the comma placed between the words 'Hesketh' and 'Players': 'Could he have written "Hesketh and" or "Heskethes"?'¹¹

Having discovered the will of Sir Thomas Hesketh, Chambers noted that it contained no clear evidence that Sir Thomas had maintained players. The Stanleys, on the other hand, maintained players for many years. Henry Stanley was a patron of a company, but it is not recorded after 1582. Chambers thus assumed that the company had passed to his son Fernando, Lord Strange, who became earl in 1593. Chambers concluded that it was 'clear that, if William Shakeshafte passed from the service of Alexander Houghton into that of either Thomas Houghton or Sir Thomas Hesketh, he might very easily have gone on into that of Lord Strange and so later into the London theatrical world [. . .]'¹² Chambers was not able to follow his investigation further because of the inaccessibility of sources during the war.

In 1946, two years after his publication of *Shakespearean Gleanings*, Chambers published *Sources for a Biography of Shakespeare*, based on his lectures at the University of Oxford during 1929–38. He presented a concise summary of the section on Shakeshafte from his previous publication:

It is possible that he [Shakespeare] is to be identified with a William Shakeshafte, who in 1581 was a player in a company maintained by one Alexander Houghton of Lea in Lancashire, and was commended in Houghton's will to Sir Thomas Hesketh of Rufford, in the same county. If so, William may have been using the variant of his grandfather's name [. . .] Sir Thomas Hesketh had in fact players in 1587, and his relations with the Stanleys, Earls of Derby, make it not unlikely that on his death in or about 1588 Shakeshafte passed into the services of Fernando Lord Strange, who

¹¹ *Shakespearean Gleanings*, pp. 55–6. Chambers's theory was challenged by Douglas Hamer in 1970. See section IV of the present chapter.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 56.

himself became Earl in 1593. [. . .] Through them William may easily have gone on into the London theatrical world.¹³

Note that by this time Chambers was convinced that Shakeshafte was a player, while in 1923 he was not certain about Shakeshafte's exact relationship with Hoghton.¹⁴

Chambers added a brief, yet important, note which had not appeared in his previous work: 'This is of course conjecture'.¹⁵

Oliver Baker

In 1937 Oliver Baker picked up the issue of Shakeshafte in his *In Shakespeare's Warwickshire and the Unknown Years*. It is interesting that, although Baker's book came out in 1937, he actually came across Hoghton's will in Piccope's *Lancashire and Cheshire Wills* in 1923 — the same year as Chambers's publication of *The Elizabethan Stage*.¹⁶ Baker provided a photographic facsimile of part of Hoghton's will. This was not only the first but also the only facsimile of the will published in biographical studies of Shakespeare up to today.¹⁷ He commented:

On reading [. . .] the will, I was arrested by the thought that Shakeshafte was the name of the Poet's grandfather, and the exciting idea entered my head [. . .] If the name of the second player [William Shakeshafte] had been Shakespeare it would have been [. . .] interesting, but one can say that Shakeshafte was the name of the Poet's grandfather, and also of at least one other ancestor.¹⁸

Not only did Baker (wrongly) believe that in the Snitterfield records, Shakespeare's grandfather, Richard was sometimes called 'Shakestaff' and 'Shakeshafte',¹⁹ but he also added that Shakeshafte was a common Lancashire name. He suspected that

¹³ *Sources for a Biography of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), p. 11. As Hamer pointed out in 1970, Chambers's claim that Hesketh had players in 1587 contradicted his 1944 statement that Hesketh's will offered no evidence for his patronage of players. See section IV below.

¹⁴ Douglas Hamer suspected that Chambers had reached this conclusion because he might have separated Hoghton's play clothes and players from his musical instruments. See section IV below.

¹⁵ *Sources for a Biography of Shakespeare*, p. 11.

¹⁶ In April 1985 Schoenbaum wondered, '[D]id Chambers lead him [Baker] to it?' ('A detour into Lancashire', *TLS*, 19 April 1985, pp. 423–4 (p. 423)).

¹⁷ Unfortunately, the facsimile is almost too small to read without a magnifier.

¹⁸ Baker, p. 298.

¹⁹ This point was challenged by Schoenbaum in 1987. See section IV of this chapter.

Shakespeare might have ‘slightly altered his name on going away, possibly without his parents’ consent’. Baker also suggested that the two servants in Hoghton’s will, Shakeshafte and Gyllome, were actors: Hoghton ‘does not say that any of the people mentioned in his will are players, but it was quite certain, from the contexts, that most of them were’.²⁰

II. The 1940s: Indirect Contribution by a non-Lancastrian

T. W. Baldwin

Although T. W. Baldwin is not a proponent of the Lancastrian theories, we must not neglect his significant contribution regarding the Lancashire schoolmasters at the Stratford grammar school. In the same year (1944) as the publication of Chambers’s *Shakespearean Gleanings*, Baldwin published *William Shakespeare’s Small Latine & Lesse Greeke* and named the schoolmasters whom Shakespeare may have known. Among them are Thomas Jenkins and John Cottom. Edgar I. Fripp had previously noted that both Jenkins and Cottom were from Lancashire and that the latter was ‘probably an older brother of Thomas Cottam’.²¹ Baldwin added more detailed accounts of their lives. He pointed out that one of the schoolmasters, Walter Roche, was a Lancashire man and succeeded by Simon Hunt, who appears to have dropped out before midsummer, 1575, and become a Jesuit, ‘since one Simon Hunt had by that time begun his progress to that order’. This ‘fact’, added Baldwin, ‘dovetails exactly with our facts, especially that Jenkins [who succeeded Hunt] came at Lady Day [25

²⁰ Baker, pp. 298 and 300. This assumption was accepted until it faced a challenge thirty-three years later when Hamer published his article ‘Was William Shakespeare William Shakeshafte?’ in the *Review of English Studies*. See section IV below.

²¹ *Shakespeare: Man and Artist*, 2 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1938; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), I, p. 92. Thomas signed his last name ‘Cottam’, while John’s was usually spelled Cottom.

March] 1575. Nor have we found so far any other Simon Hunt who could have become the Jesuit'.²²

Hunt was succeeded by Thomas Jenkins of St. John's College, Oxford. Sir Thomas White, founder of St. John's, wrote to the college on 12 December 1566 to request leave of absence for Jenkins for two years so that 'he may give himself to teach children'. Sir Thomas added that Jenkins was the son of an old servant of his in London. Baldwin considered Jenkins an important figure:

The sympathies of Sir Thomas were strongly [C]atholic. [. . .] Similarly, his college of St. John's had furnished some who strongly preferred the Roman Catholic faith, but wished nevertheless to reconcile it with political loyalty. Among these was Edmund Campion, who did not finally withdraw from St. John's till 1569. So Thomas Jenkins, who took his bachelor's in 1566, had necessarily been rather closely associated with Campion.²³

Jenkins was succeeded by John Cottom. Cottom was not only from Lancashire but the elder brother of Thomas Cottam, who by May 1575 had gone abroad to become a Catholic priest and was finally executed with Campion's missionary group. Baldwin claimed that the brevity of John Cottom's career at the Stratford grammar school could be easily explained:

²² T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakespeare's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke*, 2 vols (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1944), I, pp 467 and 476. Biographers in earlier generations were aware of one Mr. Hunt as a schoolmaster. In 1864 J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps printed an extract from the accounts of town chamberlains which records payments of £20 to 'Mr. Hunt' (*Stratford-upon-Avon in the Times of the Shakespeares* (London: J. E. Adlard, 1864), pp. 40, 45 and 48. Halliwell-Phillipps identified him with Thomas Hunt, curate of Luddington (*Outlines*, II, p. 364, n. 299). This identification was accepted by Sidney Lee (*A Life of Shakespeare*, p. 13). Arthur F. Leach, on the other hand, recognised the schoolmaster as George Hunt, who took his degree from Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1573 ('Shakespeare's [sic] School', *The Journal of Education* (January 1908) of which I could not get hold; and 'Schools' in *Victoria History of the County of Warwick*, ed. by William Page, 8 vols (London: Archibald Constable and Company for the Institute of Historical Research, University of London, 1908), II, pp. 297–373, especially pp. 335–7). In 1905 Joseph William Gray printed a teaching licence issued by bishop Bullingham of Worcester that identified the schoolmaster with Simon Hunt (*Shakespeare's Marriage and his Departure from Stratford and Other Incidents in his Life* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1905), p. 108). Two years later Charlotte Carmichael Stopes printed the licence in her *Shakespeare's Warwickshire Contemporaries* (p. 244) In 1916 A. R. Bayley accepted Gray's identification (*Notes and Queries*, 12th Series, 1 (1916), 321–3), which encouraged John B. Wainewright to point out the identification of Simon Hunt with one Simon Hunt matriculated at Douay when Thomas Stapleton was rector. (*Notes and Queries*, 12th Series, 1 (1916), 414). J. H. Pollen gives a history of the research on this issue in a rather confusing fashion ('A Shakespeare Discovery: His School-master afterwards a Jesuit', *The Month* (October 1917), 317–23).

²³ Baldwin, p. 486.

[. . .] Thomas Cottam, the priest, was captured in June 1580, but was not arraigned till November 14, 1581, along with Campion. The trials of Campion and these companions were notorious; and equally notorious was the execution of Thomas Cottam, on May 30, 1582. Since John Cottom was a brother of Thomas Cottam, the city fathers of Stratford had [a] very good reason for dismissing him shortly before January 31, 1582. It should be remembered in this connection that in 1580 strict orders with heavy penalties had been provided on the matter of suspected recusant schoolmasters.²⁴

Cottom's brother Thomas was a close friend of Robert Debdale, who on 4 June 1580 commended Thomas to his parents at Shottery and was sending by him his letter and tokens. But Baldwin believed that Thomas's projected visit to Warwickshire could have been hardly motivated primarily by the desire to deliver Debdale's letter and tokens to his parents. In Baldwin's view, Thomas was to visit his brother who was at that time teaching at the grammar school. What is more, Baldwin suspected:

[. . .] the Cottom family had some connection with Stratford which had placed John as schoolmaster, and was now also attracting Thomas as missionary priest. Since Walter Roche was a Lancashire man and still connected with Stratford, he may also have had something to do with bringing John Cottom to Stratford.²⁵

Baldwin suggested that due to Thomas's intended mission at Stratford, alluded to in Debdale's letter, John might have 'fallen under suspicion of voluntary or involuntary complicity'. Cottom was succeeded by Alexander Aspinall. Both of them were from Lancashire and of Brasenose College, Oxford. Baldwin insisted that the Lancashire and Brasenose connections were 'in some way partly responsible for Aspinall's succeeding Cottom'.²⁶

Baldwin assumed that Hunt, who became a priest and was executed with Campion, had been the schoolmaster at Stratford from about Michaelmas, 1571, and that Jenkins succeeded him on Lady Day, 1575 and remained until midsummer 1579. Baldwin believed that these two masters taught for the period when Shakespeare

²⁴ Ibid., p. 482.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 483.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 482.

might have been in grammar school, and that Shakespeare might have known Cottom and Aspinall; it is quite possible, wrote Baldwin, that Shakespeare had been taught by Cottom and even by Aspinall for a few weeks. He added that Shakespeare would have had some knowledge of the execution of Cottom's brother, whatever his personal reactions might have been.²⁷

III. The 1950s: Catholicisation

Alan Keen

On 21 April 1950 a British bookseller, Alan Keen, published an article in the *Times Literary Supplement* which drew a connection between Shakespeare and Shakeshafte.²⁸ This article has been neglected by Shakespeare biographers and critics. Keen cited from John Aubrey's biographical note 'M^r William Shakespeare' (1681): 'His father was a butcher, and I have been told heretofore by some of the neighbours, that when he was a boy he exercised his father's trade, but when he kill'd a calfe he would doe it in a high style, and make a speech'.²⁹ Keen was probably the first biographer who connected Shakeshafte with Aubrey's biographical note and introduced the theory that the tale about Shakespeare's killing a calf might have been his performance of a lost entertainment called *Killing the Calf*. Keen referred to the glossary to the 1836 publication of records of the priory of Finchale: 'there was an old dramatic representation called *Killing the Calf*. The performer played his part behind a door or curtain and by means of ventriloquism, acted at once the butcher and the animal. [. . .] Was this the calf that Shakespeare killed?' Halliwell-Phillipps, in his *Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words, Obsolete Phrases, Proverbs and Ancient*

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 477 and 488.

²⁸ 'A Shakespearian Riddle', *TLS*, 21 April 1950, p. 252.

²⁹ Quoted in Keen, 'A Shakespearian Riddle', p. 252.

Customs from the Fourteenth Century, described the play as '[a] kind of droll performance occasionally practised by vagrants in the *North* of England. It is said to be a very ancient amusement'.³⁰

Such a location as the north of England was crucial for Keen, who supported Shakespeare's connection with Lancashire, but we must pause to examine his source. This 'old dramatic representation' was performed for Princess Mary in 1521.³¹ The court accounts for Mary record 'Itm pd. to a man at Wyndesore, for killing of a calffe before my ladys grace behynde a clothe' for Christmas when she was just five years old.³² What is important to us is that the 1521 record reveals that the performance of the entertainment was not restricted to the north of England. Similarly, the glossary (Keen's source) speaks of an eighteenth-century Durham entertainer who was 'noted for begging about, and getting his living by a droll performance which he called *killing the calf*'.³³ Although it is uncertain, I believe, that this entertainment is the same one as that performed for Princess Mary, the fact is that the eighteenth-century entertainment was performed outside Lancashire, on this occasion in the far north of the county. In other words, Keen's link between Shakespeare and Lancashire through *Killing the Calf* does not sound as strong as Keen assumed.

³⁰ Quoted in Keen, 'A Shakespearian Riddle', p. 252 (emphasis added).

³¹ *The Charters of Endowment, Inventories and Account Rolls of the Priory of Finchale in the County of Durham*, Publications of Surtees Society 6 (London: J. B. Nichols and Son, 1837), glossary, s.v. 'plaerchambre' (p. ccccxli). The glossary notes that the butcher 'talked and pitied' while the calf 'moaned and seemed to pray for mercy, till its moving solicitations became fainter and fainter, and it appeared to die'.

³² Quoted in Chambers, *Facts and Problems*, I, p. 17, n. 4; S. Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 106. Chambers comments that "'Killing a calf" seems to have been an item in the repertory of wandering entertainers' (p. 17). Ian Wilson repeats that it was 'a piece of sixteenth-century popular travelling theatre' (*Shakespeare: The Evidence* (New York: St. Martin's, 1993), p. 61). Elsewhere he describes it as 'a puppet-type theatre show like Punch and Judy' ('Shakespeare the Catholic', *Renaissance Bulletin* 28 (2001), 1–18 (p. 10)). Eric Sams describes the entertainment performed for Mary as a pantomime (*The Real Shakespeare: Retrieving the Earl Years, 1564–1594* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), p. xi). The eighteenth-century entertainment was a pantomime, but there is no evidence that the performance that Mary saw was a pantomime.

³³ *The Charters of Endowment, Inventories and Account Rolls of the Priory of Finchale in the County of Durham*, glossary, s.v. 'plaerchambre' (p. ccccxli).

Two months later Keen wrote to *TLS* again: 'When preparing my special article for your issue of April 21, I had not then noticed a direct allusion to the old dramatic representation of *Killing the Calf* which occurred in *Hamlet*':³⁴

HAMLET [. . .] (*to Polonius*) My lord, you played once i' th' university, you say.
 POLONIUS That did I, my lord, and was accounted a good actor.
 HAMLET And what did you enact?
 POLONIUS I did enact Julius Caesar: I was killed i' th' Capitol. Brutus killed me.
 HAMLET It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there. [. . .]

Hamlet, III.2.89–95

Keen considered the scene autobiographical allusion.³⁵ Harold Jenkins agrees with him: 'This alludes [. . .] to the feat so called, which appears to have been part of a traditional mumming entertainment', and it was 'probably Shakespeare's skill in this historic item [. . .] that misled Aubrey to suppose that he was the son of a butcher'.³⁶ Yet neither Keen nor Jenkins explains why this could be 'a direct allusion' to *Killing the Calf*. Here 'calf' means 'fool' or 'dolt', 'a calf being regarded as the type of mental and physical imbecility'.³⁷ *The Oxford English Dictionary* lists an example from *The Winter's Tale*: 'How now, you wanton calf — / Art thou my calf?' (I.2.127–8). G. R. Hibbard points out that 'there also appears to have been some peculiar connection in Shakespeare's mind between calves and the Capitol',³⁸ and quotes a passage from *Coriolanus*: 'I would they were barbarians, as they are / Though in Rome littered; not Romans, as they are not, / Though calved i' th' porch o' th' Capitol' (III.1. 238–40).

As we have seen, the entertainment of killing a calf was not restricted to the Lancashire area. Although it has been assumed that the play was a popular item in the

³⁴ 'A Shakespearian Riddle', letter to the editor, *TLS*, 30 June 1950, p. 405.

³⁵ "'In the Quick Forge and Working-House of Thought . . .": Lancashire and Shropshire and the Young Shakespeare', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 33 (1951), 256–70 (p. 259).

³⁶ Annotation, *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare, Arden Shakespeare Series (London: Methuen, 1982; repr., Walton-on-Thames, Surrey: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1997), p. 294.

³⁷ *OED*, s.v. 'calf'; G. R. Hibbard, annotation, *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare, Oxford Shakespeare Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

³⁸ Hibbard, p. 253.

repertory of travelling entertainers, it may have been played by boys at local festivals. Douglas Hamer suggests that in Stratford boys may have acted a mumming play of killing a calf at Christmas time and that the boy Shakespeare may have either written or rewritten the verses. Katherine Duncan-Jones repeats Hamer's hypothesis.³⁹ The entertainment may have aimed to please mainly children, as it did the five-year-old Princess Mary. It may have had its origin in the medieval romance of Guy of Warwick.⁴⁰ The story tells Guy's adventures and feats, one of which was the slaying of the dun cow of Dunsmore Heath, which was derived from oral tradition.⁴¹ The cow, twelve feet high and eighteen feet long, was kept on Mitchell Fold, Shropshire. She produced an inexhaustible supply of milk for local giants. One day an old crone who had filled her pail tried to fill her sieve, which enraged the cow. She was so incensed that she broke loose from the fold and wandered to Dunsmore Heath, where she terrorised the locals and killed anyone who tried to stop her activities. Guy, who heard reports of the monstrous cow, went to the heath and after a fierce battle slew the beast.⁴²

Editions of *Guy of Warwick* began to appear in print shortly before 1500, but the versions of Guy's adventure and feats contained in these editions were already long familiar to the public through oral tradition. 'Though abridged in places and slightly modernised in language, it was in all essential respects identical with a version in short couplets composed as early as the fourteenth century, which narrated in

³⁹ Hamer, review of *Shakespeare's Lives* by S. Schoenbaum (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), *Review of English Studies*, New Series 22 (1971), 482–5, especially p. 484; Duncan-Jones, *Ungentle Shakespeare: Scenes from his Life* (London: Thomson Learning, 2001), p. 15. Hamer records a mumming stunt of the ram-killing in the 1920s.

⁴⁰ See Duncan-Jones, *Ungentle Shakespeare*, p. 15. See also her forthcoming article 'Did the Boy Shakespeare Kill Calves?' in *Review of English Studies*.

⁴¹ Velma Bourgeois Richmond, *The Legend of Guy of Warwick* (New York and London: Garland, 1996), pp. 98, and 102.

⁴² Ebenezer Cobham Brewer, *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* (1870); rev. edn, ed. by Ivor H. Evans (1970; repr, London: Cassell, 1981), s.v. 'dun cow'.

considerable detail the whole story of Guy and Raynburn his son as it had been conceived by the old French poet'. It was reprinted several times in the sixteenth century: by Wynkyn de Worde perhaps not long after 1500, by William Copland between 1562 and 1569, and by John Cawood around the same date.⁴³ These editions were 'rudely printed', and Copland's edition was furnished with rough woodcut illustrations. Like the editions of other romances, they were 'purely commercial ventures, intended to sell cheaply'. *Guy of Warwick* also remained part of literary currency through ballads, most famously *A Plesante Songe of the Valiant Actes of Guy of Warwicke* (1592), which told Guy's adventures in truncated form. In 1608 Samuel Rowlands abridged the story in six-line stanzas. It was from Rowlands's version that many chapbooks of *Guy of Warwick* were printed (and sold extremely well) in the seventeenth century.⁴⁴

Shakespeare's King John calls his half-brother 'Colbrand the Giant, that same mighty man' (I.1.225). Guy's reputation for valour is referred to in *Henry VIII*. As The Porter chides his Man for failing to control a noisy crowd surging forward at the christening of Elizabeth, his Man replies: 'I am not Samson, nor Sir Guy, nor Colbrand, / To mow 'em down before me' (V.3.21).⁴⁵ Man concludes his speech with a possible allusion to the dun cow: 'Let me ne'er hope to see a chine again — / And that I would not for a cow, God save her!' (ll. 25–6). Velma Bourgeois Richmond

⁴³ Roland S. Crane, 'The Vogue of *Guy of Warwick* from the Close of the Middle Ages to the Romantic Revival', *PMLA* 30 (1915), 125–94. The British Library preserves a fragment consisting of three leaves of this edition (STC 12540). The Bodleian Library preserves a fragment of one leaf from the de Worde edition (Douce Fragm. e.14) and the 1600 edition consisting of 24 pages (Wing F375). It was written by Samuel Smithson and printed for F. Coles, T. Vere, J. Wright and J. Clarke.

⁴⁴ John Simons, introduction to *Guy of Warwick and Other Chapbook Romances: Six Tales from the Popular Literature of Pre-industrial England* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1998), p. 20; Margaret Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 50–51, 94–6, 104 (n. 26), 150 (n. 7), and 225–7; Richmond, *The Legend of Guy of Warwick* (New York and London: Garland, 1996), pp. 237–83.

⁴⁵ H. R. D. Anders, *Shakespeare's Books: A Dissertation on Shakespeare's Reading and the Immediate Sources of his Works* (Berlin: George Reimer, 1904; repr. New York: AMS, 1965), p. 160.

argues that these allusions to Guy in Shakespeare's history plays suggest that the dramatist associated Guy with history.⁴⁶

We may even argue that Shakespeare associated Guy with the local history of his birth county. Guy's sword was preserved in Warwick Castle in the charge of a custodian appointed by royal patent. On 20 June 1509 William Hoggeson, yeoman of the buttery of the archbishop of Canterbury, was appointed keeper in place of William Lowman. In May 1531 John Thoroughgood came to assist Hoggeson in the keepership. On 14 March 1542, after Thoroughgood's death, the office passed to Edward Cresswell. At Guy's Cliff a chapel and a statue were erected early in the fifteenth century to mark the spot to which Guy had withdrawn after his victory over the Danish giant Colbrand at Winchester.⁴⁷ John Leland travelled throughout England between 1535 and 1543 on Henry VIII's commission to search monastic libraries and read the 'hystoryographers' to bring 'out of deadly darknesse to lyuelye light [. . .] the monumentes of auntyent wryters'.⁴⁸ *The Laboryouse Journey & Secche of Johan Leylande for Englandes Antiquities* was enlarged by John Bale in 1549 and presented to the king as a birthday gift. At Guy's Cliff, reported Leland, Richard, earl of Warwick, honoured his ancestor by making a new chapel dedicated to St. Mary Magdalen and providing two cantor priests for whom he built a stone house. 'He set up there an ymage of E. Guido gre[a]t lyke a giant, and enclosyd the silver welles in the me[a]dow with the pure whit slike stone like marble, and ther set up a praty [*sic*] house open like a cage coveryd, onely to keepe cummers thither from the rayne' (V.46). Leland cited local oral tradition:

old fame remaynethe with the people there, that Guydo Erle of Warwike in K. Athelstan's dayes had a great devotion to this place, and made an oratory there. Some adde unto [it] that aftar he had done greate victories on outward partes, and

⁴⁶ Richmond, *The Legend of Guy of Warwick*, p. 202.

⁴⁷ Crane, p. 135, n. 25, and p. 136.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Richmond, *The Legend of Guy of Warwick*, p. 183.

had been so long absent that he was thought to have bene deade, he came and lyved in this place lyke an heremite, onknowne to his wife Felicia ontyll at the article of his deathe he shewyd what he was. Men shew a cave there in a rok hard on Avon ripe, where they say that he usyd to sle[e]pe. Men also yet showe fayr springs in a faire me[a]dow ther[e]by, where they say that Erle Guido was wont to drinke. (V.45–6)⁴⁹

In *De rariorum animalium et stirpium historia* (1570) the naturalist Johannes Caius reported that he had seen a large rib in the chapel at Guy's Cliffe while visiting Warwickshire around 1550. He described it as an enormous bone, six and a half feet long and measuring nine inches in diameter at the smallest point. He noted that local people had identified the bone as the rib of the dun cow.⁵⁰

The Tragical History, Admirable Atchievements and various events of Guy Earl of Warwick ends with two local relics: 'the shield-bone of the bore of Callidon' on the great gate of Coventry and the ribs of the dun cow at Warwick Castle. The earliest surviving edition of the play was printed in 1661, but the Stationers' Register features for 15 January 1619/20 an entry for 'a play called life and death of Guy of Warwiche [*sic*], by John Day and Thos. Decker', and an entry for 13 December 1619/20 records a transfer of printers. This play was probably 'the Life and Death of Guy of Warwick, played by the Right honourable the Earl of Derby his men' which John Taylor saw at the Maidenhead Inn, Islington on 14 October 1618.⁵¹ Furthermore, *Covent Garden* acted by the Queen's Men sometime in 1632 has a reference to a play relating to Guy, and it is of great interest to us that the play was described as a Christmas entertaining.⁵² Shakespeare did not live to see this play, but the relic of the dun cow was at Warwick Castle in his lifetime. Shakespeare must have been familiar with the existence of these local relics as well as oral tradition relating to Guy.

⁴⁹ Quoted in Richmond, *The Legend of Guy of Warwick*, p. 184.

⁵⁰ Richmond, *The Legend of Guy of Warwick*, p. 184.

⁵¹ Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), II, p. 127. Gerald Eades Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, 7 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941–68), I, p. 228.

⁵² Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, I, p. 228.

By 1951 Keen was more firmly convinced by the Shakeshafte/Shakespeare identification, for he *believed* that he had found more pieces of evidence. In 1592 William Wright published *Greenes Groats-worth of witte*, telling us on its title-page that it was Greene's last pamphlet '[w]ritten before his death and published at his dying request'. In this pamphlet Greene, graduate of St. John's and Clare Hall, Cambridge, is presented as giving special advice to three of his contemporary 'university wits' — Christopher Marlowe (Corpus Christi, Cambridge), Thomas Nashe (St. John's, Cambridge), and George Peele (Christ Church, Oxford) — to beware of 'those Anticks garnisht in our colours', that is, actors or 'common players', who speak the lines of verse they had written for them. He singles out one such actor:

there is an vpstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers heart wrapt in a Players hide*, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Iohannes fac totum*, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrie.⁵³

It has been assumed that the actor being mocked here is Shakespeare because the line in italics is a parodic allusion to Shakespeare's *3 Henry VI* — 'O tiger's heart wrapp'd in a woman's hide' (I.4.137) — and 'Shake-scene' is a supposed reference to Shakespeare. Keen claimed that if Shakespeare had been with Hesketh's players and passed to Strange's men after Sir Thomas Hesketh's death in 1588, 'there may well have been sown at this time the seeds of jealousy' in Greene, which 'flowered in an open attack' in 1592. Greene had been courting the Stanleys' favour since 1584, dedicating *The Myrrour of Modestie* (1584) to the countess of Derby, Lord Strange's mother, and *Ciceronis Amor* (1589) to Lord Strange himself. Keen argued that Greene

⁵³ *Groats-worth of witte*, in *The Life and Complete Works in Prose and Verse of Robert Greene, M.A.*, ed. by Alexander B. Grosart, 15 vols (New York: Russell & Russell, 1881–86; repr. 1964), XII, pp. 95–150 (p. 144); *STC* 12245 (Q1). Schoenbaum presents two possible interpretations of the passage; see *Shakespeare's Lives*, p. 24, or *William Shakespeare: A Compact Documentary Life*, pp. 152–3.

might have felt that his 'territory' was invaded not by other University wits but by an 'vpstart Crow' of a provincial player.⁵⁴

For many years, Greene has been accepted as the author of the posthumous pamphlet, which was seen through the press by Henry Chettle, although scepticism about the genuineness of the authorship has been expressed from time to time.⁵⁵ In fact, the pamphlet *appears* to have been written by Greene in terms of its motifs, tone and structure, which link to some of his other works, especially *Never Too Late* and *Mourning Garment*.⁵⁶ More recent studies, however, have presented a new theory that Chettle was the actual author of the pamphlet. Under U.S. government sponsorship Warren B. Austin conducted research on the authorship using the technique of computational stylistics. The study of 'stylistics' is based on the premise that 'a writer employs the variables of expression with characteristic patterns of frequency'. Consequently, if we can 'detect the patterns in which Greene and Chettle consistently differed', these discriminators can 'provide the means to determine which of the two was the author' of the pamphlet. Five prose works of Greene (a total of 104,596 words) and three prose works of Chettle (43,190 words) were read into the computer programme. Greene's works were all written within three years of the publication of the pamphlet, and Chettle's ranged from 1592 to 1603. The data processor organised the two authors' vocabularies 'in the form of verbal indexes, concordances and order-of-frequency lists'. These computerised materials were then analysed for 'the detection of significantly different patterns of word-choice' used by the two writers

⁵⁴ He repeats the idea in *The Annotator*, p. 81.

⁵⁵ See, for example, Chauncey E. Sanders, 'Robert Greene and his "Editors"', *PMLA* 48 (1933), 392–417; Harold Jenkins, 'On the Authenticity of *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit* and *The Repentance of Robert Greene*', *Review of English Studies* 11 (1935), 28–41. René Pruvost's *Robert Greene et ses Romans*, Publications de la Faculté des Lettres d'Alger, 2e série, 11 (Paris: Société d'Édition 'Les Belles Lettres', 1938) may be of interest to readers who speak French.

⁵⁶ See D. Allen Carroll, introduction to *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit, Bought with a Million of Repentance (1592)* (Binghamton: Centre for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1994), pp. 22–3.

and ‘subsequently [for] similarly contrasted preferences in their employment of nine other linguistic variables’ in order to ‘find within each class of variable the particular usages which the two writers employed with the most distinctively different patterns of frequency’. The programme generated outputs in terms of the lexical, morphological and syntactical patterns to examine the ‘linguistic habits’ of the two writers. Austin and his assistants then systematically compared these differentiated patterns of Greene’s and Chettle’s practices with the patterns of usage of the same variables in *Groats-worth of witte* (10,999 words). This test demonstrated that the frequency patterns found in the pamphlet differed significantly from those established as characteristic of Greene but matched ‘in every case’ those established as characteristic of Chettle.⁵⁷

Reviewers were hard on Austin, and his methodology was by no means perfect.⁵⁸ Some of these stylistic links, however, are revealing and difficult to ignore. For example, in the prose works used for this test Greene never uses any of the ‘combinative conjunctive-adverb’ forms in ‘-ever’ (however, whatever, whenever, etc.) but prefers the equivalent forms in ‘-soever’. The author of *Groats-worth of witte*, on the other hand, prefers the ‘-ever’ forms more than three-fourths of the time (10 to 2), as does Chettle (22 to 7). This is ‘the strongest single piece of lexical evidence and one that is highly persuasive to common experience’, for ‘it is difficult to conceive that Greene would reverse his life time practice in this way’. The author of *Groats-worth of witte* also reflects Chettle’s habit of using both ‘-ever’ and ‘-soever’

⁵⁷ Warren B. Austin, *A Computer-aided Technique for Stylistic Discrimination: The Authorship of ‘Greene’s Groatsworth of Wit’* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare Office of Education, 1969), pp. viii–ix.

⁵⁸ *Documentary Life*, pp. 118–9; T. M. Pearce, ‘On the Chettle-Greene Question’, letter to the editor, *Shakespeare Newsletter* 21 (1971), 4; T. R. Waldo, review, *Computers and the Humanities* 7 (1972), 109–10; R. L. Widmann, review, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 23 (1972), 214–5; Richard Proudfoot, ‘The Year’s Contribution to Shakespearian Study: Textual Studies’, *Shakespeare Survey* 26 (1973), 177–84, especially pp. 182–3. See also Thomas W. Cobb’s ‘A Critical Edition of Robert Greene’s *Groatsworth of Wit*’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, Yale University, 1977), which rejects Austin’s conclusion.

forms.⁵⁹ Another striking contrast is the use of the forms of the second person pronoun ('ye' and 'you'): Greene uses the colloquial 'ye' only 0.5% of the time he uses the second person pronoun, whether singular or plural, while Chettle uses it 38.3%. The frequency of 'ye's in the pamphlet is 18.7%, closer to Chettle than Greene.⁶⁰ These results disclose that *Groats-worth of witte* reflects Chettle's habit of word-choice.

Austin's examination of thirty-three uncommon words and word-senses also favoured Chettle's authorship. The following uncommon words appear two or more times in *Groats-worth of witte*: 'cosort', 'crank', and 'however'; and in the specific senses, 'newcomer', 'reasonless' and 'relentless'. Greene does not use any of these words, while Chettle uses four of them. Furthermore, Chettle has a characteristic habit of using 'relentless' and 'however', as does the author of the pamphlet.⁶¹ In the use of seven prefixes, the rate of frequency in the pamphlet (29.3) virtually matches Chettle's average rate (31.3) and differs decisively from Greene's (18.76). As to suffixes the rate of *Groats-worth of witte* (17.1) nearly doubles Greene's (9.09) but agrees closely with Chettle's (17.56).⁶² Chettle's one other stylistic habit is his use of compounds (e.g., 'greene-springing', 'shallow-witted', 'sun-darkening', 'wind-puffed') with significantly greater frequency than Greene. The frequency of ten categories of compounds in the pamphlet corresponds more closely to Chettle's than Greene's. Most striking is that Greene does not use compounds of noun and present participle, but compounds of this type appears three times in *Groats-worth of witte* ('home-

⁵⁹ P. 23 (see also tables 9 and 10).

⁶⁰ Pp. 24–5 (see also table 12). Austin's test is based on Cyrus Hoy's theory of the use of 'ye' and 'you' as a discriminator of authorship (see p. 17). John Jowett uses this discriminator in his attribution study of Chettle in *The Book of Sir Thomas More*, but notes that the choice between the two forms may depend on the tone of the particular scene, 'ye' being 'more informal, idiomatic or intimate' ('Henry Chettle and the Original Text of *Sir Thomas More*', in *Shakespeare and 'Sir Thomas More': Essays on the Play and its Shakespearian Interest*, ed. by T. H. Howard-Hill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 131–49, especially pp. 140–1). Since Hoy tested plays by Beaumont and Fletcher, Widmann comments that Hoy's theory cannot be applied to prose (p. 214).

⁶¹ Pp. 30 and 38 (see also table 14).

⁶² Pp. 40–3 (see also tables 16 and 18). All frequency rates are given as average number of occurrences per 1,000 words.

breeding', 'sun-darkening' and 'wine-washing').⁶³ Finally, inversion of the customary order of words in a sentence was recognised by Elizabethan rhetoricians as 'hyperbaton'. As such, it can be tested as a means to distinguish stylistic variation. In twelve discriminatory categories the rate of *Groats-worth of witte* is similar to Chettle while it is three to twenty-five times higher than Greene's.⁶⁴

Recently, scholars have begun to take Austin's method and result more favourably and have combined his findings with their own.⁶⁵ D. Allen Carroll argues that although the evidence for misattribution is not conclusive, Austin's work makes it impossible to dismiss the theory of a substantial role for Chettle, and that other evidence supports Austin's conclusion. Carroll suggests that the account of the *Groats-worth of witte* protagonist Roberto's career as playwright in the pamphlet seems to depend on Gabriel Harvey's second letter published soon after 5 September (when it is dated).⁶⁶ Harvey's account of the life and death of the 'famous Author' who had 'notoriously grown a very proverb of Infamy, and contempt' both reflected and helped to create a demand for material on Greene. These two accounts make the same kind of generalizations, and parallels in terms of words and details can be easily found. Both 'describe his poverty, his irresponsible pamphleting, and his vile company'. Harvey's letter speaks of Greene's 'continuall shifting of lodgings, . . . his beggarly departing in every hostesses debt', while *Groats-worth of witte* talks of his 'shift of lodgings, where in every place his Hostesse writ up the wofull remembrance of him' (ll. 723–5). Both give his associations with the criminal Cutting Ball and Ball's sister, and both allude to Ball's hanging. In Harvey's letter 'he was intercepted

⁶³ Pp. 50–5 (see also tables 25–8)

⁶⁴ Pp. 55–68 (see also tables 36–43).

⁶⁵ Carroll, pp. 1–31, 105–6 and 131–45; Brian Vickers accepts Chettle's authorship (see *Shakespeare, Co-Author: A Historical Study of Five Collaborative Plays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 140).

⁶⁶ Carroll, pp. 1–9.

at Tiborne' and his crew are 'his trustiest companions'. In *Groats-worth of witte* he is 'trust under a tree as round as a Ball' (ll. 742–3).⁶⁷ Carroll also suspects that Harvey's letter 'anticipate[d] (perhaps [. . .] influenced)' the 'young Juvenall' section (ll. 917–26) in *Groats-worth of witte*: 'his [Greene's] fellow writer, a proper young man if advised in time' in Harvey's letter suggests the 'yong' and 'might I advise thee, be advise [sic]' in *Groats-worth of witte* (ll. 917–9).⁶⁸ We are here given two possibilities: Harvey's debt to *Groats-worth of witte*, or visa versa. The former would support the argument for the existence of *Groats-worth of witte* at the time of Greene's death, but as Carroll reasonably suggests, it is unlikely that Harvey could have seen a manuscript of *Groats-worth of witte* before composing his letter.⁶⁹ This implies the composition of *Groats-worth of witte* after Greene's death and thus dismisses his authorship.

Carroll also finds suspicious 'A letter written to his wife, founde with this booke after his death' appended to the end of *Groats-worth of witte*, for it bears no resemblance to either of the two other letters that the dying Greene is supposed to have written to her: one quoted by Harvey, apparently from memory, in his second letter as having been 'kindly shewed' to him by Mrs. Isam, who nursed Greene; the other quoted by Cuthbert Burby as having being 'to this effect' in *The Repentance* (1592). These two letters, unlike that in *Groats-worth of witte*, are short and ask his wife to pay his debt to his host. Carroll suggests that the Burby letter, published later than the Harvey letter, was 'either a refined version' of the Harvey letter 'or else what Harvey actually saw and tried to recreate'. To accept the *Groats-worth of witte* letter as authentic, we are required to assume the existence of (at least) two letters as

⁶⁷ Quoted in Carroll, pp. 7–8.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Carroll, p. 8. See also pp. 123–9.

⁶⁹ P. 8.

suggested by Harold Jenkins.⁷⁰ Another difficulty concerns the child whom Greene returned with the letter to his mother. According to Harvey, Greene had with him at his death the mother, Cutting Ball's sister, of his 'base sonne' named Infortunatus. *Groats-worth of witte* also says that Greene's 'boy' was ever with him (l. 725). One Fortunatus Greene was buried in Shoreditch on 12 August 1593. We have three possible solutions: Greene had two sons; the writer of the pamphlet confused two names; Harvey's report is inaccurate. Carroll finds these possibilities all unlikely, and expresses a strong doubt as to the authenticity of the *Groats-worth of witte* letter.⁷¹

Furthermore, Carroll argues that two of the plays listed by the player-patron of *Groats-worth of witte* as part of his old-fashioned repertory appear to be among those listed by the players as part of theirs in *The Book of Sir Thomas More*: 'twas I that pend the Morrall of mans witte, the Dialogue of Dives' (ll. 674–5) in *Groats-worth of witte* and 'Dives and Lazarus . . . and the Marriage of Wit and Wisdom' in *Sir Thomas More* (II.2.60–3).⁷² John Jowett attributes the *More* scene to Chettle (Hand A) 'with little fear of contradiction'.⁷³ It is assumed that Chettle collaborated with Anthony Munday (Hand S) sometime in the spring or summer of 1592. It has been suggested that Shakespeare may be a co-author of the play (Hand D), and Peter W. M. Blayney and Scott McMillin, for example, date Shakespeare's addition in late 1592.⁷⁴ Interestingly, Peter Blayney finds echoes of words — in Blayney's terminology, echoes working at a 'less-than-conscious level' — between Hand D and Chettle's *Kind-hartes Dreame*. Scott McMillin argues that the 148-line Shakespeare section

⁷⁰ 'On the Authenticity of Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit* and *The Repentance of Robert Greene*', 34.

⁷¹ Jenkins, 'On the Authenticity of Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit* and *The Repentance of Robert Greene*', 34–5; Carroll, pp. 10–1.

⁷² *Sir Thomas More*, ed. by Vittorio Gabrieli and Giorgio Melchiori, Revels Plays Series (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

⁷³ 'Henry Chettle and the Original Text of *Sir Thomas More*', p. 147.

⁷⁴ Carroll, p. 12. Duncan-Jones has cast strong scepticism on the Shakespeare attribution and decided to omit the discussion of 'Hand D' in her biography (*Ungentle Shakespeare*, p. xii).

must have insinuated its 'word into the book and volume of Henry Chettle's brain'.⁷⁵

The preface to *Kind-hartes Dreame* opens with 'It hath been a custome Gentle men (in my mind commendable) among former Authors (whose workes are not lesse beautified with eloquente phrase, than garnished with excellent example) [. . .]', which recall the attack on Shakespeare in *Groats-worth of witte*.⁷⁶

There is some circumstantial evidence to support Chettle's authorship.

According to Carroll:

Greene was so popular that anything with his name on it was certain to sell. All other words have grown 'out of request', Harvey lamented in the very month Chettle was generating the text, 'and the Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia is not greene inough for queasie stomackes, but they must have *Greenes* Arcadia: and I beleeeve most eagerlie long for *Greenes* Faerie Queene'. Chettle had no steady source of income, no shop of his own. He seems to have relied on the odd composing job and literary grubwork.⁷⁷

Plague spread in London in the late summer and fall of 1592 and must have restricted Chettle's work, possibly creating a financial crisis. Carroll speculates that it was financial need that prompted him to produce *Groats-worth of witte*.⁷⁸ Henslowe recorded debts, and Chettle's name repeatedly appears among the debtors. On 16 September 1598 Henslowe recorded that Chettle owed the Admiral's men £8 9s. 'al his boockes & Recknynges payd'. On 3 November Henslowe recorded in the margin that Chettle borrowed the total of 18s. 4d. from him 'to ar[r]est one wth lord lester'. On 17 January 1598/9 the company lent him 30s. to 'paye his charges in the marshallsey [Marshalsea]'. On 2 May Chettle and Dekker borrowed £1 from Henslowe to discharge Chettle from the arrest of Ingrome.⁷⁹ On 22 October 1598, Chettle made an acknowledgment of his debt to Henslowe:

⁷⁵ Blayney and McMillin quoted in Carroll, p. 18.

⁷⁶ Quoted in Carroll, p. 18.

⁷⁷ Carroll, p. 12.

⁷⁸ P. 13.

⁷⁹ *Henslowe's Diary*, ed. R. A. Foakes and R. T. Rickert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961; 2nd edn, 2000), pp. 98, 100, 103, and 119. Walter W. Greg believes Henslowe's entries in the margin to refer to private debts to him, to company transactions (*Henslowe's Diary*, ed. by Greg, 2 vols (London: A. H. Bullen, 1904 and 1908), II (1908), p. 253. See also Sanders, p. 394.

Beit knowen to all men by these presents that I henry
 Chettle of London Stationer doo ow vnto Philip Hinshow
 of the parish of St Sauours the sume of ix^{ll} ix^s, on this
 22th [sic] of october 1598. In witnes whereof J haue here vnder
 sent [sic] my hand. henry chettle.

Wytnesse Robt Shaa [autograph signature]⁸⁰

In the mid-October Henslowe recorded in the margin that he lent Chettle the total sum of £1. Another loan of 3s. from Henslowe is dated 18 July 1601, and another of 5s. on 29 July 1602. On 25 March 1602 the Admiral's men lent £3 to Chettle upon his sealing a bond to write for them.⁸¹ These references indicate that Chettle was generally in financial difficulty. Nashe, in response to Harvey's criticism that 'like Curtizan' he prostituted his pen, answered with a plea of poverty: 'Twice or thrise in a month, when *res est angusta domi*, the bottome of my purse is turn[e]d downward, & my conduit of incke will no longer flowe for want of reparations, I am faine to let my Plow stand still in the midst of a furrow, and follow some of these new-fangled *Galiardos* and *Senior Fantasticos*, to whose amorous *Villanelas* and *Quipassas* I prostitute my pen in hope of gaine'.⁸² The author of the epistle ('To the Gentleman Readers') to *Greenes vision* (1592) gives poverty as a sufficient excuse: 'Many things I haue wrote [sic] to get money, which I could otherwise wish to be supprest: Pouertie is the father of innumerable infirmities'.⁸³

In 1603 Chettle was quick to exploit the death of Queen Elizabeth with *Englands mourning garment* (STC 5122). Carroll suggests that Chettle may have been 'uniquely capable of pulling off such a hoax', for his training as a compositor 'would have taught him skills of memory that, as a would-be writer, he could exploit in

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 119.

⁸¹ Ibid., pp 125, 177, and 204.

⁸² *Haue with you to Saffron-walden* (London, 1596), in *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. by Ronald B. McKerrow and F. P. Wilson, 5 vols (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957–8), III, pp. 3–139 (p. 30). See also Carroll, p. 13.

⁸³ STC 12261. The epistle is signed 'Yours dying, / Robert Greene', but we may need to be cautious about its authorship (see Carroll, p. 13). Carroll gives some other external evidence which 'might implicate' Chettle's authorship of *Groats-worth of witte* (see pp. 19–20), which I believe needs further examination.

imitating the styles of others, and he would have done so because he was otherwise uneducated'.⁸⁴ Although the authorship of *Groats-worth of witte* has not been firmly established yet,⁸⁵ this new theory, which has been neglected by most Shakespeare biographers,⁸⁶ provides us with a different story of the first documented episode in Shakespeare's career as a common player (although Lancastrians would consider it the second episode). Instead of a university wit attacking a less-educated Warwickshire man, we now have a young actor whose performance, along with 'the sensationalised news of Greene's death' (the pamphlet was published within three weeks of his death), prompted Chettle to perpetrate 'a publishing hoax to exploit the public interest'.⁸⁷ Furthermore, if Chettle was the actual author of *Groats-worth of witte*, or co-author responsible for the composition of the majority of the pamphlet, then we have no reason to believe that the attack on Shakespeare in this pamphlet reveals Greene's jealousy of Shakespeare over the patronage of the Stanleys.

Keen, of course, had no knowledge of the authorship issue. He asserted that Hoghton's will offered 'confirmation' of oral tradition in Rufford, Lancashire, that Shakespeare had stayed with the Heskeths there as a young man. Keen believed that he might have found Alexander Hoghton's 'Instruments belonginge to mewsyckes' at Rufford. Lord Hesketh had found at his home, Easton Neston, some old musical instruments which were among household effects moved some years previously from Rufford. Keen believed that from this 'fortuitous discovery' it seemed clear that these might well have been Hoghton's musical instruments if they 'did in fact pass' to Sir Thomas Hesketh.⁸⁸ Yet we should not accept Keen's proposition so easily. Firstly,

⁸⁴ P. 17.

⁸⁵ For various critics' objections to Chettle's authorship, see Carroll's summary on pp. 27–30.

⁸⁶ One exception is Duncan-Jones. She believes, however, that Thomas Nashe is 'by far the stronger suspect' (*Ungentle Shakespeare*, pp. 44–7).

⁸⁷ Austin, p. xi.

⁸⁸ "In the Quick Forge and Working-House of Thought . . .", p. 261.

Keen *suspected* (but was *not* certain) that some of these instruments *may* have been in an inventory, now in the County Records at Preston, of the goods of 'Robert Hesketh late of Rufforth [*sic*], esq' dated 16 November 1620. These musical instruments may have belonged to Robert Hesketh of Rufford, but there still remains another problem: Keen did not identify the origin of these musical instruments — that is, where (or whom) they came from and how (in what circumstance or on what occasion) they got there. No evidence was presented to prove that the musical instruments were passed on from Shakeshafte's master.⁸⁹ Keen may have poured too much imagination into this 'fortuitous discovery'.

Keen pointed another connection between Shakespeare and Lancashire. He directed our attention to Thomas Savage, a Lancashire man to whom, along with William Leveson, Shakespeare and four other sharers in the Chamberlain's men granted a half-interest as a trustee for the ground lease of the Globe in 1599. Keen, however, only repeated Leslie Hotson's discovery of five years before.⁹⁰

In the next chapter we shall see how E. A. J. Honigmann has used Shakespeare's poem known as 'The Phoenix and (the) Turtle' to construct (rather than prove) Shakespeare's Lancashire connection. But we cannot attribute the entire novelty to Honigmann, for Keen was the first Lancastrian to propose that Shakespeare might have acquainted himself with John Salusbury at Knowsley, the seat of the earl

⁸⁹ In 1985 E. A. J. Honigmann reported that Sir Barnard de Hoghton's father, Cuthbert, had seen the Hoghton crest on some instruments at Rufford, where Sir Thomas Hesketh had lived. Some of them were stored at Easton Neston, but none of them carried the Hoghton crest. Honigmann therefore had no means to identify any of them with the instruments listed in Alexander Hoghton's will, or to estimate how old the instruments with the Hoghton crests might have been. (*Shakespeare: The 'Lost Years'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985; 2nd edn, 1998), pp. 32–3.

⁹⁰ "In the Quick Forge and Working-House of Thought . . .", p. 262. Savage left bequests of forty shillings to 'the poor of Rufforth [*sic*]' in the parish of Croston (miswritten Crofton), Lancashire, 'where I was borne', and twenty shillings to his cousin, the widow of Thomas Hesketh, of Rufford'. He closed his discussion by carefully saying: 'To be sure, we may have here an astonishing coincidence and nothing more. Yet it would be deplorable to leave it without testing the theory further. Perhaps means may be found to follow the clue' (*Shakespeare's Sonnets Dated and Other Essays* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1949), pp. 127–9).

of Derby. The poem first appeared without a title in a group of fourteen poems appended to Robert Chester's *Loves Martyr* in 1601 (and for this reason I call the poem 'Let the bird of loudest lay', as does the recent Oxford edition). The title-page of *Loves Martyr* informed readers that Chester's poem was 'Allegorically shadowing the truth of Loue, / In the constant Fate of the Phoenix / and Turtle'. Shakespeare's own poem appeared as the fifth in the group of fourteen poems otherwise by Marston, Chapman, Ben Jonson, and an anonymous poet. The group of these fourteen poems had a separate title-page (p. 177):

HEAREAFTER
FOLLOVV DIVERSE
Poeticall Essaies on the former Sub-
iect; viz: the *Turtle* and *Phoenix*.

Done by the best and chieftest of our
moderne writers, with their names sub-
scribed to their particular workes:
neuer before extant.

And (now first) consecrated by them all generally,
to the love and merite of the true-noble Knight,
Sir Iohn Salisburie.

Dignum laude virum Musa vetat mori.

[Device]
Anchora Spei

MDCI.

The dedicatee was a literary patron of local poets among whom was Chester. Salusbury's wife, Ursula *née* Halsall or Stanley, was an illegitimate, but acknowledged, daughter of Henry Stanley, fourth earl of Derby. After her marriage she and her husband kept in touch with her father. *The Derby Household Books* record that on 15 December 1587 'Mr. Sharesbrike came and also Mr. Salesbury [*sic*]'. Salusbury departed two days later. It was this December that *The Derby Household Books* record Sir Thomas Hesketh's visit. As we have seen, seven years earlier Chambers had wondered about the comma in 'S^r Tho. Hesketh, Players went awaie'.

Keen pointed out that Raines's transcription that Chambers had used was in error. According to Keen, J. Ernest Jarratt saw the original manuscript after the war, and the passage in question actually reads: 'S' Tho. Hesketh plaiers went awaie' without a comma. Keen thus suspected that Shakeshafte might have met Salusbury during these two days or even earlier.⁹¹

Keen described Shakespeare's poem as 'a compliment by the young Hesketh player [Shakeshafte/Shakespeare] to his host Lord Derby and his daughter Ursula Stanley'. Did he imply that the turtledove was to be identified with Derby and the phoenix with his daughter? If he did, it would have been an odd proposition. Even though it would explain why the two birds have left 'no posterity' (l. 59), it would, at the same time, suggest incest between Derby and his daughter — the poem cannot have been 'a compliment' to them. Keen had an escape plan: he speculated that Shakespeare originally wrote the poem about 1587 — a date suggested by Quincy Adams in his *A Life of William Shakespeare* (1923) — and had 're-polished [or] even re-written' it for inclusion in the 1601 volume dedicated to Salusbury.⁹²

In 1954 Keen, with Roger Lubbock, published his ten-year research under the title *The Annotator: The Pursuit of an Elizabethan Reader of Halle's Chronicle Involving Some Surmises about the Early Life of William Shakespeare*. It is not an overstatement that Keen's work made one of the greatest contributions to the Lancastrian theories; he provided valuable research information, which other Lancastrians were to use as sources for their own research.

Previously, Lancastrians had made a range of suggestions regarding why Shakespeare's name (if it was his) appeared as 'Shakeshafte' in Hoghton's will. Keen himself had previously speculated that Shakespeare might have adopted the variant

⁹¹ "In the Quick Forge and Working-House of Thought . . .", pp. 263–4.

⁹² Ibid., p. 264. See chapter 4 for Honigmann's proposition and my own discussion of the poem.

used by his grandfather as a theatrical alias.⁹³ This time Keen suggested two hypotheses. One of them was '[a] young man who was anxious to fit in with the household, or who wished to be unobtrusive for other reasons, could easily have adopted the local variant'. The other was that the lawyer executing Hoghton's will, or his scrivener, might have set down 'Shakeshafte' as the more usual form in the area.⁹⁴

More importantly, Keen was probably the first Lancastrian to argue that it was for a *religious* purpose that Shakespeare's father sent him to Lancashire:

John Shakespeare's name twice appears in lists of men at Stratford who clung to the 'old Religion' and would not attend parish church — 'recusants'. It seems very probable that if, in the middle 1570s, he was becoming unpopular in Stratford and [was] being harried for his faith, he would have felt that the town grammar school was no place for his son to be brought up in.⁹⁵

Unfortunately, Keen failed to establish a particular aspect that connected the Shakespeares in Stratford and the Hoghtons in Lancashire: 'we do not know what recommendation John Shakespeare may have been able to find to help his son into patronage at [the Hoghtons of] Lea Hall as a singing-boy'.⁹⁶

Keen presented another hypothesis: he speculated, without documentary evidence, that Shakespeare went to Douai and then to Rome with the schoolmaster Simon Hunt and Debdale. In 1576 Richard Hoghton obtained a licence to visit his exiled half-brother, Thomas, at Antwerp. He was given a permit to stay abroad for two months. Keen suggested that 'in the circle of English papists on the Continent'

⁹³ "In the Quick Forge and Working-House of Thought . . .", p. 258.

⁹⁴ Keen, *The Annotator: The Pursuit of an Elizabethan Reader of Halle's Chronicle Involving Some Surmises about the Early Life of William Shakespeare* (New York: Macmillan, 1954), p. 75. Douglas Hamer later showed that 'Shakeshafte' had been a common name in the Preston area; in the Preston Burgess Rolls, Hamer counted forty-five 'Shakeshafte's (including its variants) in 1542–1622. Among them thirteen appeared with the given name 'William', but Hamer believes that some of them 'must present the same man when they appear in two successive records' ('Was William Shakespeare William Shakeshafte?', *Review of English Studies*, 21 (1970), 41–8 (pp. 45–6)). Hamer's article, however, intended to disclaim the Shakeshafte/Shakespeare identification. See section IV of this chapter.

⁹⁵ Keen, *The Annotator*, p. 76. From this document alone, however, we cannot be certain that John was a recusant; see my argument in chapter 5. See also my argument concerning the term 'recusants' in appendix A.

⁹⁶ Keen, *The Annotator*, p. 77. See my analysis of the record and other documents relating to John's life in the 1570s in chapter 5, in which I show that John was in fact in financial difficulty.

Richard might have found the twelve-year-old Shakespeare, who ‘was inclined to fancy his future as a player more than as a priest, and was chafing to get back to England’ and that Richard might have taken the young Shakespeare to Lancashire with him, and the boy later entered service at Lea Hall. ‘To avoid reawakening the odium incurred by his departure from Stratford to Douai a year earlier under the wing of a papist pedagogue’, Keen suggested, the young Shakespeare may have called himself Shakeshafte.⁹⁷ Although this speculation was highly fanciful and is not supported by any evidence — and surely, changing his name from Shakespeare to very similar Shakeshafte would not have been a good choice for an alias ‘to avoid reawakening the odium’ caused by his departure — Keen’s study proved to be a crucial point in the development of the Lancastrian theories: in 1954 — not in 1594 — Shakespeare became a Catholic through Keen’s agency.

We know that by 1582 Shakespeare was back in Stratford; his marriage to Anne Hathaway was licensed in November of that year.⁹⁸ The Shakespeares’ first daughter was born in May of the following year, and their twins in February 1585. Keen, therefore, speculated that both domestic cares and the need for money might have urged Shakespeare afield from Stratford to Lancashire again — this time to Rufford in order to join Sir Thomas Hesketh’s players. If Shakespeare needed further introduction to the Heskeths, Keen contended, he would have been able to find it locally. In 1582 Worcester’s men visited Stratford. Keen suspected that with them that year or the next year came sixteen-year-old Edward Alleyn, whose mother was related to the Heskeths. Keen thus speculated that in 1582 or 1583 Shakespeare might have met Alleyn and through him made a further connection with the Heskeths.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Keen, *The Annotator*, p. 103.

⁹⁸ See my discussion on this topic in chapter 5.

⁹⁹ *The Annotator*, p. 80.

Another Lancashire connection which Keen disclosed was John Weever. In 1599 Weever dedicated his *Epigrammes* to Sir Richard Hoghton, high sheriff of Lancashire and a nephew of Alexander Hoghton.¹⁰⁰ One verse in *Epigrammes* is dedicated to Sir Thomas Holcroft, whose aunt, Alice, married Sir Thomas Hesketh of Rufford. The twenty-second epigram in the fourth week is addressed 'Ad Gulielmum Shakespeare' and extols the dramatist's early works. In addition, in 1600 he dedicated his *Faunus and Melliflora* to Edward Stanley. What we have here, however, are circumstantial connections between Shakespeare and Lancashire men, none of which reveals the identity of Shakeshafte.

Keen was also the first Lancastrian to make an attempt to examine Shakespeare's plays themselves and connect internal evidence with external — unsuccessfully. He suspected that the first version of *Love's Labour's Lost* might have been performed by Strange's men at the Prescott playhouse.¹⁰¹ Keen believed that Prescott, barely two miles from Knowsley, the seat of the earl of Derby, would have been a perfect location for Strange's men setting out on their provincial tours.¹⁰² Examining a contemporary historical event in Lancashire, he found a clue in George Connes's *The Shakespeare Mystery* (1927), where Connes had drawn attention to William Stanley, sixth earl of Derby. William was born in 1561, the younger son of Henry, fourth earl. In 1572, like his older brother, Ferdinando, William went to St. John's College, Oxford, and in 1582 at the age of twenty-one travelled to France with his Welsh tutor, Richard Lloyd. In Paris in 1584 he received a hearty welcome at the court of Henry III, on whom his father was deputed to confer the Order of the Garter.

¹⁰⁰ The dedication-page of *Epigrammes* reads: 'To the Right Worshipfull and worthie honoured Gentleman Sir Richard Houghton of Houghton Tower, Knight: Iustice of Peace, and Quorum: High Sheriff of Lancashire, &c. Adorned with all giftes, that valour may giue, or vertue gaine'.

¹⁰¹ The title-page of the first quarto states that the play was 'Newly corrected and augmented / By W. Shakespere'.

¹⁰² *The Annotator*, p. 53.

William then visited the Loire, Orleans, Blois, Tours, Saumur, Angers; then we lose trace of him, but Connes conjectured that William was in Navarre between 1582 and 1587. William and Lloyd were back at Lathom House, the Stanleys' other mansion in Lancashire, in June 1587, when 'a great cycle of theatrical representations' was given there for more than a month, and the earl of Leicester's company played the chief part in the performances. Keen thus speculated that at Stanley's return Shakespeare, under the name of Shakeshafte, could have gleaned materials from the returned travellers for his comedy and offered this 'lightly-drawn, hastily-composed play of topicalities' to Leicester's men.¹⁰³

Keen admitted that his theory about the source of *Love's Labour's Lost* was a fancy.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, there appears to be inconsistency in his argument. On one hand, he argued that Shakespeare 'could have gleaned materials' for his comedy from the travellers who returned in 1587, and offered the play to Leicester's men in the same year when 'a great cycle of theatrical representations' took place in Lancashire for more than a month. Here Keen seems to have been suggesting that an early version of Shakespeare's play was performed by Leicester's men in 1587. On the other hand, he suggested, as we have seen, that the first version of *Love's Labour's Lost* was performed by Strange's men at the Prescot playhouse, and that Robert Tofte's 'obscure allusion to the play' in *Alba: The Months Minde of a Melancholy Lover* (1598) —

Loves Labours Lost, I once did see a Play
Yclepèd so, so called to my paine,
Which I to heare to my small Ioy did stay,
Giuing attendance on my froward Dame . . .¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Ibid., pp. 57 and 60.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 60.

¹⁰⁵ Quoted in Keen, *The Annotator*, p. 54.

— was ‘possibly a record of that early staging which is mooted by the Cambridge editors: “In our opinion its first performance had Christmas 1593 for date and for place some great private house”’.¹⁰⁶ The Cambridge editors (Arthur Quiller-Couch and John Dover Wilson) actually wrote: ‘In our opinion its first performance had Christmas 1593 for date and for place some great private house, *possibly the Earl of Southampton’s*’.¹⁰⁷ Keen seems to have accepted the editors’ proposal for the date for the first performance of Shakespeare’s comedy, for he only omitted the editors’ conjecture regarding the place for that performance and cited their dating as it was. If, however, Keen was not suggesting that Leicester’s men played Shakespeare’s comedy in 1587, then it leads on to the conclusion that Keen suggested, whether he was aware or not, that the play was passed on to Strange’s men sometime before 1593 without having been performed by Leicester’s men in or after 1587. But Keen mentioned nothing about the possible reason for which, and route or means by which, the play may have been passed on.

Keen attempted to reinforce his theory by connecting Lancashire with two ‘obscure and undoubtedly topical allusions’ in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*: ‘the schoole of night’ (folio, IV.4.251; quarto, IV.3.252) and the nine Worthies (V.2.110–21). He repeated an assumption which Frances Yates had presented in *A Study of ‘Love’s Labour’s Lost’* (1936): the young men in the play can be an allusion to ‘either the Raleigh group, immersed in their studies’, or ‘the Essex-Southampton group who laugh at schemes of that kind’, and the play’s ‘mockery of high-flown intellectual pretensions’ is a reply to George Chapman’s poem *The Shadow of Night* published in

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁰⁷ Arthur Quiller-Couch and John Dover Wilson, introduction to *Love’s Labour’s Lost* by William Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge university Press, 1923), p. xii (emphasis added).

1594.¹⁰⁸ Analysing Chapman's poem, Keen contended that Chapman named some of Raleigh's friends in his dedication to *The Shadow of Night*, and that the fifth earl of Derby was among 'those who pursue[d] knowledge with proper seriousness'.¹⁰⁹ Shakespeare's comedy, Keen thus argued, contains allusions to Derby.

Yates's study, though Keen did not clarify, was an extension of the theory first set out by Arthur Acheson in his *Shakespeare and the Rival Poet* (1903) and then adopted by the Cambridge editors, Quiller-Couch and Dover Wilson: that the school of night actually existed, that Chapman's *Shadow of Night* was a product of this group, and that the academe of Navarre in *Love's Labour's Lost* is Shakespeare's satire on it. Their theory was based on what Robert Parsons called 'Sir Walter Raleigh's school of atheism', a group of men studying astronomy, mathematics, and unorthodox, even heretical, beliefs. Raleigh was its leader, and other members included Chapman, whom the Cambridge editors recognised as the rival poet in Shakespeare's sonnets, the fifth earl of Derby, Henry Percy (ninth earl of Northumberland), Sir George Carey (later Lord Hudson), Matthew Roydon, Christopher Marlowe and the mathematician and astronomer Thomas Harriot. Shakespeare, the Cambridge editors hypothesised, belonged to a 'rival party', allied to the earl of Essex and the earl of Southampton. Shakespeare 'was vowed to' this 'rival party [. . .] in suit of his young patron' and had his 'fling' at Raleigh's coterie 'as an offence *contra naturam*'.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in Keen, *The Annotator*, p. 56. Arthur Acheson, following up William Minto's clues in *The Shadow of Night* to find out the identity of the 'dark lady' and the rival poet in Shakespeare's *Sonnets* (*Characteristics of English Poets from Chaucer to Shirley* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood, 1885)), argued that a School of Night did exist, that Chapman's *Shadow of Night* was a product of the school, and that the Academe of Navarre was Shakespeare's satire on it (*Shakespeare and the Rival Poet* (London and New York: John Lane, 1903)).

¹⁰⁹ Keen, *The Annotator*, p. 56.

¹¹⁰ Quiller-Couch and Wilson, introduction to *Love's Labour's Lost*, pp. xxviii–xxxiv.

This theory was widely accepted among scholars, especially after it was ‘developed in much greater detail and with far more circumspection’ by Yates.¹¹¹ Richard David, for example, claimed: ‘What could the mysterious “schoole of night” [. . .] more fitly be than the “Schoole of Atheisme” in whose hono[u]r had been written *The Shadow of Night*? And does the sneer [. . .] in “Beauty [. . .] not utter’d by base sale of *chapman*’s tongues’ pun on the name of that poem’s author?’¹¹² In 1941, however, this theory was challenged by Ernest A. Strathman, who was at the time engaged in his major work on Raleigh (published in 1951 under the title *Sir Walter Raleigh: A Study in Elizabethan Skepticism*). ‘Although sixteenth century references to or attacks upon the Raleigh coterie, collectively or singly, are not infrequent’, Strathman could not find ‘a single unmistakable instance’ in which the group was called the School of Night’.¹¹³ In satire, the allusion to the satirised subject ought to be recognised by the audience; if the audience fails to spot the allusion, the satire does not work. Strathman thus commented:

[Following the Cambridge editors] we are asked to believe that one phrase, picked by an alert and informed audience from its context or pointed by the actor, would convey a specific secondary meaning. It is rather much to ask, even of the presumably initiate, and it suggests a subtlety in the use of satire which one would be surprised to meet in Elizabethan literature. [. . .] The present writer, believing that the lines contain no esoteric meaning, would extend to such shadowy allusions as this is said to be the New Cambridge editor’s own indictment of the personal interpretations of Shakespeare’s play [. . .]¹¹⁴

The Cambridge editors’ ‘fundamental errors’, claimed Strathman, result from their ‘attempts to personalize’ the play. It is true, he said, ‘that Chapman’s *Shadow of Night*

¹¹¹ M. C. Bradbrook not only accepted the theory but also argued that the members of ‘[t]he School of Night [. . .] laid the foundations for the metaphysical poets’ (*The School of Night: A Study in the Literary Relationships of Sir Walter Raleigh* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), p. 178). For different possibilities of topicality in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, see Mary Ellen Lamb, ‘The Nature of Topicality in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*’, *Shakespeare Survey* 38 (1985), 49–59.

¹¹² Introduction to *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, Arden Shakespeare Series (London: Methuen, 1951), pp. xlv–xlvi (David’s emphasis).

¹¹³ ‘The Textual Evidence for “The School of Night”’, *Modern Language Notes* 56 (1941), 176–86 (p. 181).

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 181 and 185.

and the speeches of Berowne present contrasting philosophies', 'that Raleigh and Northumberland were patrons of scientific learning' and 'that the Raleigh coterie was accused of unorthodox beliefs [. . .]' But 'there is no independent evidence' to establish the 'schoole of night' in *Love's Labour's Lost* as an allusion to Raleigh and his associates.¹¹⁵

Keen's theory of the nine Worthies is as troublesome as that of 'the schoole of night'. In V.3:

HOLOFERNES Sir, you shall present before her the Nine Worthies. Sir Nathaniel, as concerning some entertainment of time, some show in the posterior of this day to be rendered by our assistance, the King's command, and this most gallant, illustrate, and learned gentleman before the Princess, I say none so fit as to present the Nine Worthies.

NATHANIEL Where will you find men worthy enough to present them?

HOLOFERNES Joshua, yourself: myself, Judas Maccabeus; and this gallant gentleman, Hector. This swain, because of his great limb or joint, shall pass Pompey the Great; the page, Hercules.

Keen suggested that Shakespeare's source was *A briefe discourse of the most renowned actes and right valiant conquests of those puissant [sic] Princes, called the Nine worthies* by William Stanley's tutor, Richard Lloyd, published in 1584.

Traditionally, the nine Worthies are: Joshua, David and Judas Maccabeus from the Biblical era; Hector of Troy, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar from the pagan era; and Arthur, Charlemagne (Charles the Great) and Godfrey de Bouillon from the Christian era. In *A briefe discourse* Lloyd introduced Guy of Warwick instead of Godfrey (see illus. 2).¹¹⁶ Shakespeare, on the other hand, named five, two of whom (Pompey and Hercules) had not been traditionally included among the nine Worthies before his play. Keen did not notice these differences between Lloyd and Shakespeare, which appear to suggest that Lloyd's *A briefe discourse* is not a source for

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 186. See also Charles Jasper Sisson, *New Readings in Shakespeare*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), I, p. 115.

¹¹⁶ *A briefe discourse of the most renowned actes and right valiant conquests of those puissant [sic] Princes, called the Nine worthies* (London, 1584), STC 16634.

Shakespeare's comedy, though I do not deny the possibility that Shakespeare read *A briefe discourse*. Keen pointed out that there was 'a striking resemblance between Lloyd's handling and introduction of the Worthies and that in the play':¹¹⁷

A brief discourse A Lyon which sitting in a chaire bent a battel-axe in his paw
argent.¹¹⁸

Love's Labour's Lost Your lion that holds his pole-axe sitting on a close-stool
will be given to Ajax (V.2.568–9).

This resemblance, however, is not as striking as Keen suggested, for both of these lines could be based on one of the Worthies, Alexander's coat of arms, which had a lion sitting on a throne and holding a battle-axe.¹¹⁹ In Gerard Legh's *Accedence of Armorie* (1591, 1597 and 1612),¹²⁰ for example, Alexander's arms are blazoned as 'Geules, a Lion or, seiante in a chayer, holding a battle-axe argent'. C. W. Scott-Giles suspects that Shakespeare may have derived the image from this book.¹²¹ There seems no evidence to support Keen's claim that 'Lloyd's pedantry had been transformed into clever burlesque'.¹²²

One other Lancashire connection which Keen indicated was a set of the two verses in Collegiate Church of St. Bartholomew, Tong, Shropshire (illus. 3). According to Keen, these verses are engraved at the ends of the tombs of Sir Thomas and Sir Edward Stanley:

[carved on the east end of the tomb]
Ask who lies here, but do not weep
He is not dead, he dooh bvt sleep
This stony register, is for his bones
His fame is more perpetval than these stones

¹¹⁷ Keen, *the Annotator*, p. 59.

¹¹⁸ Quoted in Keen, *The Annotator*, p. 60.

¹¹⁹ G. R. Hibbard, annotation, *Love's Labour's Lost*, by William Shakespeare, Oxford Shakespeare Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), V.2.570–1 (p. 219); F. R. Woudhuysen, annotation, *Love's Labour's Lost* by William Shakespeare, Arden Shakespeare Series (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1998; repr. London: Thomson Learning, 2001), V.2.571–2 (p. 276).

¹²⁰ STC 15391 (1591 edition), 1592 (1597), 15393 (1612).

¹²¹ C. W. Scott-Giles, *Shakespeare's Heraldry* (London: J. A. Dent and Sons, 1950), p. 20.

¹²² Keen, *The Annotator*, p. 60. See also Keen, 'Love's Labour's Lost in Lancashire', letter to the editor, *TLS*, 21 September 1956, p. 553. For Shakespeare's knowledge of heraldry, see Scott-Giles, pp. 17–25. For the requirements for arms that were likely to be in force during Elizabeth's reign, see Anthony Richard Wagner, *Heralds and Heraldry in the Middle Ages* (London: Oxford University Press, 1939; 2nd edn, 1956), pp. 77ff (2nd edn).

And his own goodnes[s], w[i]t[h] him self being gon[e]
 Shall live when earthlie monament [*sic*] is none

[carved on the west end thereof]
 Not monv[m]entall stone preserves ovr fame
 Nor sky aspyring piramids ovr name
 The memory of him for whom this stands
 Shall ovtlyve marbl[e] and defacers' hands
 When all to times consvmption shall be geven
 Standly [*sic*] for whom this stands shall stand in heaven¹²³

Sir Thomas was of Winwick, Lancashire and died in 1576. Keen (inaccurately) identified Sir Edward with a brother of Henry, fourth earl of Derby, who died in 1609. *The Derby Household Books* record Sir Edward's frequent visits to Knowsley and Latham between the years 1561 and 1589. He was also Lord Strange's uncle. Keen suggested that Shakespeare might have met Sir Edward at Knowsley either when he was there with Hesketh's players or when he started to work with Strange's men. According to Keen, these verses are attributed to Shakespeare 'in a MS of c. 1630' and by William Dugdale ('Visitation of Shropshire, 1663–1664').¹²⁴

Firstly, Keen's identification of Sir Edward is inaccurate. The Sir Edward in question is Sir Thomas's son, who died in 1632. Keen confused the two Edwards probably because he thought that Shakespeare, who died in 1616, could not have written an epitaph for Sir Thomas's son who died in 1632. Secondly, the monument is for three members of the Stanley family: the forgotten one is Margaret, Sir Thomas's wife and thus Sir Edward's mother (illus. 5). The main structure commemorates Sir Thomas and Margaret. Beneath their tomb is the effigy of their son. Thirdly, there is reason to believe that these poetical texts may well be two halves of one epitaph rather

¹²³ My transcription from the photographs of the verses in Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (with John Jowett and William Montgomery), *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 25. It appears that Keen had not seen the tomb, for he only quoted F. E. Halliday's transcription of a seventeenth-century manuscript.

¹²⁴ Keen, *The Annotator*, p. 202. Dugdale's 'Visitation' is preserved in the College of Arms, London (MS c. 35).

than two separate epitaphs. The second folio of Shakespeare's works (1632) contains John Milton's epitaph 'On Shakespeare':¹²⁵

An Epitaph on the admirable Dramaticke Poet, W. SHAKESPEARE

What neede my *Shakespeare* for his honour'd bones,
The labour of an Age, in piled stones
Or that his hallow'd Reliques should be hid
Vnder a starre-ypointing Pyramid?
Deare Sonne of Memory, great Heire of Fame,
What needst thou such dull witnesse of thy Name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thy selfe a lasting Monument:
For whil'st to th' shame of slow-endavouring Art
Thy easie numbers flow, and that each part,
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued Booke,
Those Delphicke Lines with deepe Impression tooke
Then thou our fancy of her selfe bereaving,
Dost make us Marble with too much conceiving,
And so Sepulcher'd in such pompe dost lie
That Kings for such a Tombe would wish to die.

Gordon Campbell has recently suggested that Milton's poem is modelled on the epitaph carved on the Stanley monument:

Milton's poem would seem to be modelled on this text. Both rhyme 'bones' and 'stones' and 'fame' and 'name', and perhaps most strikingly, the original of Milton's 'star[re]-ypointing pyramid' is recognizable in this poem's 'sky-aspiring pyramids', which conveys the same idea in the same rhythm. The tomb is surmounted by four obelisks that would seem to be the 'pyramids' of the memorial poem; in early modern English the word 'pyramid' could be used of any structure of pyramidical forms, including spires, pinnacles and obelisks.¹²⁶

According to Campbell, the date of the tomb cannot be precisely fixed, but on the basis of 'various inscriptions on it, together with stylistic considerations', he suggests that we should think 'in terms of two dates': the tomb of Sir Thomas and his wife Margaret seems to date around 1602 or 1603, while the effigy of their son Edward was slid in afterwards, presumably shortly after his death in 1632.¹²⁷ Milton's poem is dated 1630 by the poet himself. If Milton imitated the verse on the tomb, then the

¹²⁵ STC 22274, 22274a, 22274b, 22274c.

¹²⁶ 'Shakespeare and the Youth of Milton', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 33 (1999), 95–105 (p. 97).

¹²⁷ Ian Wilson proposes a date of 1601–2 in consideration of 'clues on the monument's accompanying inscription', one of which is 'no show of Sir Edward's knighthood bestowed upon him in 1603' (*Shakespeare: The Evidence* (New York: St. Martin's, 1993), p. 289).

verse must have been carved there by 1630, that is, before Edward's death. Campbell thus suggests that these verses are two stanzas or sections of one poem carved separately, and that the epitaph commemorates Sir Thomas, not Sir Edward. As Honigmann points out, early modern wills included instructions for the burial of the testators.¹²⁸ However, it seems unlikely that Sir Edward instructed his burial in 1602 or 1603 — nearly thirty years before his death. Although we cannot be certain which half of the epitaph comes first, Campbell suggests that the verse on the east end of the tomb ('Ask who lies here') appears more appropriate as an opening line, and the last line of this stanza, with its mention of an 'earthly monument', seem to 'lead naturally on to' the first line of the other stanza 'Not monumental stones preserves thy fame'.¹²⁹

Keen's source for the 'MS of c. 1630' was F. E. Halliday's *A Shakespeare Companion 1550–1950* (1952), which did not identify the manuscript he used.¹³⁰ We have five seventeenth-century manuscripts that contain the epitaph (see appendix C). Halliday transcribed either the Portland manuscript (MS Pw. V.37, p. 12) at Nottingham University or the Folger Library manuscript (MS V.a.103, Pt. 1, fol. 8), both of which are written in the same hand and attribute the epitaph to Shakespeare. Another is in the Rawlinson manuscript in the Bodleian Library (MS Rawlinson Poetical 117, fol. 269v). This manuscript offers no context, has no title, omits two lines, transposes two others and contains seven substantive variants from the other texts: in line 3, for example, it reads 'monument' for 'memory' and in line 7 'earthly' for 'stony'. The scribe assumed that it was a single poem, beginning with 'Not monumental stones'. The final two texts of the epitaph are in Dugdale's 'Visitation'

¹²⁸ *Shakespeare: The 'Lost Years'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985; 2nd edn, 1998), p. 80.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

¹³⁰ *A Shakespeare Companion 1550–1950* (London: Gerald Duckworth, & Co., 1952); rev. edn published as *A Shakespeare Companion 1564–1964* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), s.v. 'Stanley, Sir Thomas'.

manuscripts. Keen, drawing on Halliday, referred to one of them (MS c.35, p. 20) that is in Dugdale's handwriting. The other (MS c.35, p. 41) occurs after the one Keen referred to and is written in a different hand. It lacks an attribution but contains a drawing that shows the obelisks — 'sky aspiring pyramids' or 'starre-ypointing Pyramid[s]' — which originally surrounded the tomb (illus. 6). The drawing is by Francis Stanford, then *Lancaster Herald*.¹³¹

Campbell believes that there must have been a local oral tradition which attributes the epitaph to Shakespeare, and that this oral tradition is independent of the manuscript tradition. He suggests that it is more likely that Dugdale heard about the attribution when he visited the collegiate church of St. Bartholomew or that as a native of Warwickshire he knew of some tradition than that he saw one or more of the manuscript attributions. Campbell also considers the attribution probable, for, besides Shakespeare's connection with the Stanley family through his theatrical patron, there are 'clear analogies' with Shakespeare's sonnets and Richard II's speech of 'sky-aspiring ambitious thoughts' in the tournament scene. In addition, it is curious that the bones-stones rhyme appears on Shakespeare's own grave in Stratford.¹³²

Ian Wilson suggests that the Catholicism of the Stanley family for whom Shakespeare wrote the epitaph reveals the poet's own Catholicism.¹³³ However, even if the attribution of the epitaph to Shakespeare is correct, it does not prove that he was a Catholic. Writing an epitaph for a Catholic does not make Shakespeare himself a

¹³¹ Campbell, pp. 97–9.

¹³² Halliday, believing them to be two separate epitaphs, considered that the verse at the east end of the tomb ('Ask who lies here') could have been by Shakespeare but 'certainly not' the other. Halliday does not indicate why he believes that the second verse is not Shakespeare's. See *A Shakespeare Companion 1550–1950*, s.v. 'Stanley, Sir Thomas'. Campbell suggests that 'I.M.' whose poem appears in the first folio of Shakespeare's works may be John Milton the elder, whose patron, Thomas Morley, was a neighbour of Shakespeare. According to Campbell's hypothesis, Milton the elder, who published a poem in the first folio, arranged for his son, who was still unknown as a poet at that time, to contribute a poem to the second folio. See Campbell, pp. 102–4.

¹³³ *Shakespeare: The Evidence*, p. 290.

Catholic. Wilson's claim rests on a wrong assumption that Protestants and Catholics were never acquainted with each other. It is based on his belief in a clear-cut division between Catholicism and Protestantism, which did not exist in Elizabethan England. The religious condition in England was not as simple as Wilson argues. As we shall see in chapter 6, Catholicism and Protestantism merged together in Elizabethan England, and this *religious pluralism* deconstructed the division between the supposed binary opposites Catholicism/Protestantism.¹³⁴

In 1955 Keen wrote to the *TLS* again. In *The Rolls of the Freemen of the City of Chester* (1906) he found the following record of the Chester Midsomerday pageant:

1595–6, 37–39 Eliz.

Oct. 15 Foulk Gillam s. of Thomas Gillam of Chester embroiderer

Keen was convinced that they were 'ffowke Gyllom' and 'Thomas Gyllome' named in Alexander Hoghton's will as annuitants to receive £2 (see appendix B.2). Keen believed that the son, whom Hoghton recommended to Sir Thomas Hesketh, could not join the players at Rufford Hall because Sir Thomas was in custody at Manchester for recusancy, and that on the death of Hoghton he might have returned to their native Chester with his father. For the same reason, Keen speculated, Shakeshafte/Shakespeare may have returned to Stratford with 'a "hole year's wages" in his purse and married Anne Hathaway. In 1585, when Sir Thomas was released from prison, Shakespeare may have gone back to Rufford to join Sir Thomas's players. Keen, as we have noted, suspected that in December 1587 Shakespeare, being one of Sir Thomas's players, may have visited Knowsley where he may have acquainted himself with Derby and Salusbury.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ According to Wilson's logic, Milton, who wrote an elegy on Shakespeare (who would have been a Catholic because he composed an epitaph for a Catholic) would have been a Catholic. Milton was a Puritan — Wilson's logic collapses.

¹³⁵ 'Shakespeare's Northern Apprenticeship', letter to the editor, *TLS*, 18 November 1955, p. 689. Compare his theory with Honigsmann's (discussed in chapter 4).

It is not clear what made Keen so sure of the identifications of these Chester men. The evidence seems too thin. Keen believed that both were ‘guild-players’ because the guild of minstrels in Chester was ‘one of the most powerful and important in the country’.¹³⁶ Yet the record Keen found describes the Chester men as ‘embroiderer[s]’ and seems to suggest that they were paid for their needlework rather than for their performance.¹³⁷

The Lancashire connections that Keen has presented are all circumstantial and contain a number of problems. They also fail to establish any link between Shakespeare and the Hoghtons (or even Lancashire) before 1581 — the year when Alexander Hoghton mentioned one William Shakeshafte in his will. Keen, however, did in fact make a great contribution to the Lancastrian theories in that he provided a number of connections between Shakespeare and the Lancashire network, which other Lancastrians were later to rework.

Robert Stevenson

Keen failed to establish any particular connection that might have taken the young Shakespeare from Stratford to Lancashire. Robert Stevenson, in 1958, connected the two places in his *Shakespeare's Religious Frontier*. Stevenson seems to have been the first biographer to claim that the Lancashire clues support one another.¹³⁸ As I have indicated already, Baldwin showed that the Stratford grammar school had had three schoolmasters from Lancashire: Walter Roche, John Cottom, and Alexander Aspinall. Stevenson revealed further that Cottom, the schoolmaster from 1579 to 1582, had been not only a native of Lancashire, but also a neighbour of Alexander Hoghton's, as

¹³⁶ Quoted in ‘Shakespeare's Northern Apprenticeship’, p. 689.

¹³⁷ Keen expands his ‘Chester players’ theory in ‘Shakespeare and the Chester Players’, letter to the editor, *TLS*, 30 March 1956, p. 195. In the present thesis I do not discuss this theory further because I am not convinced that the Chester men were players.

¹³⁸ Honigmann, in the preface to the second edition of his *Shakespeare: The ‘Lost Years’*, claims that Peter Milward was the first to recognize the connections among the clues.

the Cottom family property lay next to Hoghton's, and Lawrence Cottom, the schoolmaster's father, carried on business transactions with Alexander Hoghton's father. On 8 January 1558 Lawrence acquired from Richard Hoghton 'interest in a moiety of a close containing five acres of arable land for the purchase price of 22 marks'. Richard was succeeded by his son, Thomas, usually referred to in legal documents as 'the Right Worshipful Thomas'. Thomas left England in 1569 and died in exile at Liège on 2 June 1580. After his death the bulk of the family property came into Alexander's possession. Stevenson reported that the inheritance had consisted of lands and tenements not only in Alston but also in Dilworth, where the Cottoms lived.¹³⁹ Stevenson thus saw John Cottom as the link between Shakeshafte and Shakespeare.

Stevenson's theory requires us to presume that Cottom knew Shakespeare. But we are not told whether Cottom actually taught Shakespeare at the grammar school or he met the future dramatist through the previous schoolmaster. Either way, it would be mere speculation. Since Alexander Hoghton made his will in 1581, Shakespeare, if Shakeshafte is to be identified with him, left Stratford for Lancashire sometime before 1581. Cottom was the schoolmaster in Stratford until 1582, so he could not take his pupil to his native county unless he took leave. Did the young Shakespeare travel on his own? Stevenson was silent regarding this point, and this, as we shall see shortly, is precisely where Lancastrians are going to exercise their imagination.

In November 1582 Shakespeare was licensed to marry Anne Hathaway, and their first child, Susanna, was baptized on 26 May 1583. In Alexander's will of 1581 Shakeshafte was bequeathed a year's wages in addition to an annuity of £2. Stevenson thus speculated that 'enjoying an interval of financial competence, Shakeshafte — if

¹³⁹ *Shakespeare's Religious Frontier* (Netherlands: Hague, 1958), pp. 69–70.

Shakespeare — would have been free to revisit Stratford and to marry'. Stevenson conjectured further that 'if he then returned to Lancashire after exhausting the Hoghton bequest, and placed himself under Sir Thomas Hesketh's patronage, he would have as easily maintained his Stratford contacts during his service with Hesketh as he later did after his removal to London'.¹⁴⁰

Stevenson also examined in detail three families in Lancashire crucial to the Lancastrian theories: the Hoghtons, the Heskeths, and the Stanleys. He suggested that Shakespeare could have been a schoolmaster as well as an actor at the Heskeths. According to Stevenson, Sir Thomas Hesketh had a great interest in education and 'for a considerable number of years acted as governor of the "free Schole of Queene Elisabeth in Blackburne"'.¹⁴¹ Referring to Aubrey's report — Shakespeare 'understood Latine pretty well: for he had been in his younger yeares a Schoolmaster in the Countrey' — Stevenson suggested that under the patronage of Sir Thomas Hesketh Shakeshafte/Shakespeare could have been both a schoolmaster and an actor.

H. A. Shield

As we have just seen, Stevenson regarded John Cottom, schoolmaster at the Stratford grammar school in 1579–82, as the link between Shakeshafte and Shakespeare. In 1961 H. A. Shield reworked Stevenson's theory and added a hypothesis, which Peter Milward later repeated. During Cottom's stay in Stratford, Derby's men made two visits to the Warwickshire town. The corporation's payments of gratuities to them are recorded in February 1580 and January 1581. Shield suspected that it was on one of these occasions that the young Shakespeare, 'possibly with the advice or assistance of

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 73. (Stevenson's source is *The Records of Blackburn Grammar School*, 3 vols, Remains Historical and Literary Connected with the Palatine Counties of Lancashire and Chester, New Series 66–8 (Manchester: Chetham Society, 1909), I, p. 37.)

the schoolmaster', travelled to Lancashire with the company, and that he later acquired 'the rudiments of his trade' in the Catholic households of the Hoghtons and the Heskeths and then joined Lord Strange's company. In other words, Shield saw both Cottom and Derby's men as the missing links between Shakespeare and Shakeshafte. Shield also suggested that the 'John Cotham' named in Alexander Hoghton's will might be the schoolmaster, and more than two decades later E. A. J. Honigmann repeated this idea.¹⁴²

IV. The 1970s: Challenges

For the rest of the 1960s the Lancastrian theories enjoyed a peaceful time. The theories, however, encountered serious challenges in 1970 when Douglas Hamer and S. Schoenbaum separately published their counter-arguments.

Douglas Hamer

Hamer rejected the identification of Shakeshafte with Shakespeare and openly looked down upon the theory as 'a scholar's dream-solution'. In 1581, the year of Alexander Hoghton's will, Shakespeare was seventeen years old. Thus, Hamer argued, Shakespeare was unlikely to have been 'a prized "player"'. He reasoned that at the age of seventeen Shakespeare 'was not likely to have been so expert an actor, musician, or singer as to receive, with Fulke Gillom, a very special recommendation to another possible employer'. Hamer insisted 'that the Shakespeare we know did not begin to

¹⁴² 'A Stratford Schoolmaster', *The Month* (August 1961), 109–11 (p. 111). Shield suggests that the 'lovely boy' in Shakespeare's sonnets is William Hughes of Holt, whom Shield believes to have been a grandson of Edward Hughes of Holt Castle, who visited the fourth earl of Derby in December 1587 and July 1590 ('Links with Shakespeare VI', *Notes and Queries* 195 (1950), 205–6.)

emerge as an actor or as a dramatist until he was nearly thirty years of age'.¹⁴³

Moreover, he argued:

if he actually were employed in far-off Lancashire under an alias in and before 1581, it is strange that, reverting to his paternal and baptismal name of Shakespeare, he should [. . .] marry Anne Hathaway in 1582, live continuously in Stratford until after the birth of his twins in 1585, and then [. . .] reappear in 1587 as a 'player' [. . .] in the service of Sir Thomas Hesketh in Lancashire [. . .] and then turn up in London under his proper surname in or before 1592 under another patron, probably the Earl of Pembroke, who had no connection with Lancashire.¹⁴⁴

Hamer protested that Chambers had ignored the point that 'there was no reason why Shakespeare should conceal his identity under a grandfather's alternative form of the surname'.¹⁴⁵

While Chambers assumed that the 'players' to whom Houghton had referred in his will were actors, Hamer suggested that they were not actors but musicians. He argued:

[Chambers] would seem to have separated 'Instruments belonging to Mewsyckes . . . Instruments' from 'playe clothes . . . players . . . players', and in this I think he erred, because the straightforward interpretation of this passage in the will is that the musical instruments, play-clothes, and players all go together, and that here we have to do, not with musical instruments and actors, but with musical instruments and musicians.¹⁴⁶

Hamer added that according to *The Oxford English Dictionary* the term 'player' had been 'in use since 1463 to signify "One who plays an instrument of music", a point which Chambers had overlooked'. *The Oxford English Dictionary* does not record 'play-clothes'.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ Douglas Hamer, 'Was William Shakespeare William Shakeshafte?', *Review of English Studies: A Quarterly Journal of English Literature and the English Language* 21 (1970), 41–8 (pp. 42, 41 and 45 respectively). Honigmann insists on an earlier start of Shakespeare's career. See chapter 4 in the present thesis.

¹⁴⁴ Hamer, 'Was William Shakespeare William Shakeshafte?', 41–2. Hamer does not provide any evidence for his claim relating to Shakespeare's continuous residence in Stratford. Duncan-Jones and Helen Cooper are now working on this theory (Duncan-Jones, personal communication by e-mail, 17 May 2001). We may call scholars who argue for the dramatist's residence in Stratford in his youth 'Stratfordians' as opposed to 'Lancastrians'.

¹⁴⁵ Hamer, 'Was William Shakespeare William Shakeshafte?', 45.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 43–4.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 44.

Another key argument Hamer presented was that Hoghton's bequest of annuities to his servants including William Shakeshafte amounted to a non-subscription form of the tontine system: 'subscribers to a load [or common fund] each receive for life an annuity, which is increased as other subscribers die, until the last survivor receives the whole sum of the annuities'.¹⁴⁸ If Shakespeare was at Hoghton's household under the name of Shakeshafte in or before 1581, then he must have been no more than seventeen years old. According to Hamer:

the annuitants draw annuities which increase with the death of each annuitant until the last draws the whole income for life [. . . Therefore,] the annuitants are initially graded according to their actual ages at the time when the capital sum or capital income is established. The basic idea is that over the years all the annuitants shall, in the normal way of living and dying, receive approximately the same amount. The oldest annuitant thus receives the highest initial annuity because he would be normally the first to die [. . .]: the youngest receives the lowest initial annuity because normally he would outlive all the others and end up with the whole income available.¹⁴⁹

Shakeshafte was in the group of four men who received initial annuities of £2. Only one legatee (out of thirty) received more (£3 6s. 8d.). Hamer concluded that the arrangements for the payment of the annuities suggested that Shakeshafte must have been as old as thirty to forty.

Hamer challenged Chambers's analysis of *The Derby Household Books*. He first pointed to a contradiction in Chambers's analysis. In his 1944 *Shakespearean Gleanings*, Chambers informed his readers that the will of Sir Thomas Hesketh 'contains no clear evidence that he maintained players'. In his *Sources*, which came out two years later, he claimed that 'Sir Thomas Hesketh had in fact players in 1587'. Hamer also contended that Chambers had 'overlooked the fact that Farington [who

¹⁴⁸ Hamer, 'Was William Shakespeare William Shakeshafte?', 43; David M. Walker, *The Oxford Companion to Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), s.v. 'Tontine'. According to the *OED*, the scheme was initiated by Lorenzo Tonti in France around 1653, and it was not until 1765 that we find the first usage of the term 'tontine' in English (s.v. 'tontine'). I cannot confirm that a similar financial scheme was already available in England by the time Alexander Hoghton made his will. See also Honigmann's argument in the next chapter.

¹⁴⁹ Hamer, 'Was William Shakespeare William Shakeshafte?', 44–5.

kept the original records of the *Household Books*] invariably used the terminal ‘-s’ of the possessive [. . .] and only broke it after ‘my L. of Essex’, thus following the old rule of terminal ‘-x’ as a possessive [. . .]’. Hamer thus rejected Chambers’s theory that the omission must indicate a possessive ending to ‘S^r Tho. Hesketh’. To reinforce his argument, Hamer pointed out further that the phrase ‘S^r Tho. Hesketh, Players went awaie’ lacked a verb after ‘Hesketh’ to say whether he came or went. Comparing this with other phrases in the *Household Books*, he concluded that ‘we are quite clearly face to face with Farington’s shorthand: the omission of a verb meant either *came* or *went*, but probably the former’. If Sir Thomas came and the players went away, ‘there is no case’ for Chambers’s theory that Sir Thomas was the patron of the players recorded in the *Household Books*.¹⁵⁰

In short, Hamer concluded, Chambers ‘did not prove that Shakespeare began his stage and dramatic career with the Hoghtons and the Heskeths, under the name of William Shakeshafte. It is now clear that he did not.’¹⁵¹

S. Schoenbaum

In the same year as the publication of Hamer’s article, Schoenbaum published his *Shakespeare’s Lives* and praised Hamer for having ‘effectively answered the question in the negative’. In his discussion of ‘the monographs on selected aspects of the poet’s career, on his family and on the Warwickshire context’ in the twentieth century, which he regarded as ‘treatises, sometimes more ambitious and illuminating than conventional Lives’, Schoenbaum briefly — in the equivalent of one page and a half — referred to the Lancastrian theories. His primary concern was the (in)accuracy of the variant-surnames of Richard Shakespeare used in the Snitterfield manor records.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 47–8.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 48.

Although he accepted that ‘Shakstaff’ was not unlike ‘Shakeshafte’, he claimed that ‘Shakeshafte’, thought to be a variant of Richard’s name, was a misreading of Shakestaff in a (misdated) 1533 record. For some reason, Lancastrians in later years were to miss this clarification. Schoenbaum considered the Lancastrian theories ‘intriguing possibility[ies]’, but he nevertheless concluded that the theories were ‘sobering reflection[s]’ that a number of Shakeshaftes resided in Lancashire and Cheshire in the sixteenth century.¹⁵²

Keen, as I have indicated, had speculated that Shakespeare may have met Sir Edward Stanley at Knowsley, and that he composed an epitaph on the death of Sir Edward. Schoenbaum challenged Keen’s theory:

Could the Stanleys thus commemorated be the uncles of Ferdinando Stanley, Lord Strange, fifth Earl of Derby, who was the patron of Lord Strange’s Men — a company with which Shakespeare may have had an association in the early ‘nineties? Such an identification is tempting, but Sir Edward, who died in 1609, had no connection with Tong. His nephew of the same name did; but this Sir Edward died in 1632, too late to be the subject of the epitaph, if (as is very questionable) Shakespeare composed it.¹⁵³

Schoenbaum thus rejected Keen’s theory: ‘such are the genealogical mazes through which scholars would have to thread their ways’.¹⁵⁴

Peter Milward, S.J.

Three years later (1973) the Jesuit scholar Peter Milward published *Shakespeare’s Religious Background*. It is interesting to note that although he discussed the Lancastrian theories, he did not refer to the counter-arguments presented by Hamer and Schoenbaum. This may be because he wrote his draft before Hamer’s article and Schoenbaum’s book were published, although Milward, as his ‘Bibliographical Index’ indicates, did read Barton’s *The Wars of the Roses*, which came out in the same year

¹⁵² Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare’s Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 736, 727, 735 and 736.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 78.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 78.

as Hamer's article and Schoenbaum's book. It is possible that Milward submitted his draft to his publisher after Barton's book came out and before Hamer's article and Schoenbaum's book were published, and that Milward did not update his draft before publication.

As regards the Lancashire connections of three Stratford schoolmasters (Simon Hunt, Thomas Jenkins, and John Cottom) Milward simply repeated the information which Baldwin had presented before. Yet what distinguished Milward from Baldwin was that the former was conscious of Shakeshafte and the theories around him whereas the latter was not. Milward wrote a chapter particularly on the English Jesuits, who he believed might have had an influence upon Shakespeare. (We should remember that Milward himself is a Jesuit.) He suspected that the future dramatist could have listened to the preaching of the future martyr, Campion, at Hoghton Tower, which Milton believed Campion had visited in the winter of 1580.¹⁵⁵

We must pause to examine Milward's source of information for Campion's preaching at Hoghton Tower: Dom Bede Camm's *Forgotten Shrine*. According to Camm:

[Thomas] Hoghton's brother Richard, who entertained Father Campion at Hoghton Tower, was arrested in the summer of 1581, immediately after the martyr's own apprehension. It appears that a number of Catholic books and papers had been left by Father Campion at Hoghton Tower, and these he was on his way to fetch, when he was arrested at Lyford Grange.¹⁵⁶

Camm's source was Joseph Gillow's *The Haydock Papers: A Glimpse into English Catholic Life* (1888). Not only did Gillow write that Richard Hoghton managed his

¹⁵⁵ *Shakespeare's Religious Background* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1973), p. 44. See my discussion of Richard Wilson's 'Hoghton Tower' theory in chapter 4.

¹⁵⁶ *Forgotten Shrines: An Account of Some Old Catholic Halls and Families in England, and of Relics and Memorials of the English Martyrs* (London: Macdonald & Evans, 1936), p. 186. See also p. 184.

brother's estate and 'seems at this time to have resided at the Tower', but he also claimed that Richard and his wife were interrogated under the Privy Council's order 'touching Campion's being at Hoghton Tower [. . .] and his book'.¹⁵⁷

There is, however, no documentary evidence that Richard and his wife were questioned 'touching Campion's being at *Hoghton Tower*'. Richard Hoghton's residence was Park Hall, near Charnock Richard in the parish of Standish, to the south of Preston, over ten miles from Hoghton Tower. Richard and his wife were questioned if they harboured Campion, but there is no evidence that Richard resided at Hoghton Tower before the Tower passed to him when Alexander Hoghton died in August 1581. In 1581 Campion spent several weeks in Lancashire — probably between Easter and Whitsuntide — working on his *Rationes Decem* [*Ten Reasons*]. Campion was captured at Lyford in Berkshire on 17 July. He was dispatched to the Tower of London where he was tortured on the rack under the Privy Council's order. The Council recorded that Campion had disclosed the names of the Catholics under whose roofs he had found shelter. In a letter dated 2 August 1581 to Sir John Biron, sheriff of Lancashire, and Sir Edmond Tradforde, the Council commands them to

repaire unto the dwellinge houses of certain persones in their Lordships' letter mentioned, havinge be[e]n harbourers of Edward Campion latelie sent from Rome contrarie to her Majesties Proclamacion, and to cause the said persones to be examined whether the said Campion hathe ben there or no, whether he said anie Masse there, together with such other particularities as they shall thincke meete to be enquired of.¹⁵⁸

Next comes a command of great interest: Biron and Traforde are required 'to cause the said houses to be searched for bookes and other superstitious stuffe, especiallie the house of Richard Houghton, where it is said the said Campion left his bookes, and to enquire what is become of the said bookes [. . .]'.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ *The Haydock Papers: A Glimpse into English Catholic Life* (London: Burns & Oates, 1888), pp. 15–9 and 23.

¹⁵⁸ *The Acts of the Privy Council*, New Series, XIII, pp. 148–9.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, XIII, p. 149.

As reported in a letter of 30 August 1581 sent to the earl of Derby, Sir John Biron and Sir Edmond Tradforde, the authorities made a search of Richard Houghton's house: 'in aunswer of a letter of the xvth of this present sent unto their Lordships from the said Sir John and Sir Edmonde, &c., together with th'examinacions of Thomas Southworthe, Richard Houghton and Bartholomewe Heskethe, and certaine other papers founde in Houghton's house [. . .]' By this time Campion had been taken to Berkshire, and the authorities were desperate to find evidence of his activities. The letter reports that 'seinge the said parties persist in the denial of Campion's beinge in their houses, which at sundry times hath ben confessed by him', the council required the Lancashire officials 'not to release them out of prison until they shall have further order from their Lordships'. Two recipients of Campion's letters, one Rishton and one Richardson, were to be examined 'to discover a greater number of such persons in that shire'. The officials were further required to 'reexamine Richard Houghton and his wiffe touching Campion's being there, and Raffe Emerson, his man, and his bookes, and also touchinge the bookes sent downe by Rishton and dispersed in that shire [. . .]',¹⁶⁰

The Privy Council's letter dated 12 November sent to Derby, Brion and Tradfford clearly states that Richard Houghton was of Park Hall. The commissioners were instructed 'to take bondes with sufficient surties in good somes of money of Sir John Southworthe, knight, Thomas Talbott, Bartholomewe Hesketh, Richard Houghton of the Parke, Rigmoden, Westbye and Mrs. Allen, mother unto Doctour Allen, for their personall app[er]eance here before their Lordships by a certaine daie to be prefixed by hys Lordship, allowing them so much tyme as shall

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., XIII, p. 184.

suffice for their repaire heither, and suche as cannot or shall refuse to geve sureties for their app[er]e[n]ce to be sent under safe g[u]arde at their owne charges'.¹⁶¹

These and other documents relating to the Privy Council's activities show that during his stay in Lancashire Campion lodged with the Worthingtons of Blaimscough, the Talbots of Salesbury, the Southworths of Samlesbury, the Heskeths of Aughton, Mrs Allen, the widow of the Cardinal's brother, probably of Rossall, the Hoghtons of Park Hall, the Westbys of Mowbreck and the Rigmaidens. State papers and the Privy Council's letters contain no evidence to support Gillow, Camm and Milward's assertion that Richard Hoghton entertained Campion at Hoghton Tower. Gillow's claim that Richard Hoghton and his wife were interrogated 'touching Campion's being at Hoghton Tower' rests on his assumption that Richard's residence was the Tower. Richard was the son of Sir Richard Hoghton by Anne and founded the family of Park Hall. Although Elizabeth granted a licence to Richard in 1576 to visit Thomas in Antwerp for two months,¹⁶² no evidence has been produced to prove Gillow's assumption that Richard was residing at Hoghton Tower while Campion was in hiding in Lancashire. In the absence of such evidence, it seems more likely that in 1581 Richard's residence was Park Hall, and that it was at Park Hall that Campion was able to consult many of the books he used in writing *Rationes Decem*. Camm appears to have taken Gillow's narrative for granted, and Milward, who did not check the Privy Council's record, simply accepted Camm's statement.

The story of Campion having visited Hoghton Tower also appears to rest on local tradition of the 'old missionary altar'. According to the tradition posted on two websites, the Historic Lancashire Organisation's 'Lancashire Halls & Houses' and

¹⁶¹ Ibid., XIII, p. 257.

¹⁶² Elizabeth's licence is transcribed in Catholic Record Society, *Miscellanea III*, Catholic Record Society Publications 3 (London: J. Whitehead & Son, for Catholic Record Society, 1906), pp. 2–3. The volume also contains a facsimile of the licence (frontispiece).

‘The Old Missionary Altar’,¹⁶³ Thomas Burgess who lived at Dineley on the Towneley estate, Burnley, made the ‘old missionary altar’ around 1560. When Sir John Towneley was arrested in 1564, the Burgesses considered it too dangerous to stay on the estate and consequently moved to Denham Hall, a farm that belonged to the Hoghtons of Hoghton Tower. Apparently, the family carried the altar with them, for it is said that Catholics travelled to Denham to hear Mass said at the altar.

According to this local tradition, Campion took refuge at Denham Hall and said mass at this altar. The two websites, however, neither provide their source of information nor replied to my enquiry regarding their source, even though the Historic Lancashire Organisation declares that it ‘seeks to provide a comprehensive & factual source of information’.¹⁶⁴

S. Schoenbaum

In 1977 the Lancastrian theories once again faced a challenge. Schoenbaum published *William Shakespeare: A Compact Documentary Life*, an abridged edition of his memorable *William Shakespeare: A Documentary Life* (1975). In *A Compact Documentary Life* Schoenbaum referred to the fact, which I have already indicated, that Milward did not consult Hamer’s article; he mocked, ‘Unfortunately, Father Milward, publishing [his book] three years later, missed it [Hamer’s counter-argument]. Such are the perils of scholarship’. On the one hand, it may be thought ironic that even though the 1975 *Documentary Life* had a chapter entitled ‘The Lost Years’, Schoenbaum did not mention Shakeshafte. Milward (and other Lancastrians) may want to mock Schoenbaum by saying, ‘Such are the perils of scholarship’. On the

¹⁶³ The Historic Lancashire Organisation’s ‘Lancashire Halls & Houses’ < <http://www.lancshalls.co.uk/chorleyhalls.htm> >; ‘The Old Missionary Altar’ < <http://www.watson.vampires.co.uk/altar.htm> >. The latter appears to be a personal, family website. The Historic Lancashire Organisation’s website states that ‘Edward Campion’ stayed at Denham Hall.

¹⁶⁴ ‘About the Historic Lancashire Organisation’, < <http://www.lancshalls.co.uk/about%20us.htm> >.

other hand, we may assume that in 1975 Schoenbaum firmly refused to go beyond documentary evidence and thus purposely avoided any discussion of the subject.

In the 1977 *Compact Documentary Life*, however, Schoenbaum added a discussion on the Lancastrian theories. He said, 'Where opportunity offered, I have enriched my narrative with additional information: sometimes by inserting a phrase or sentence, sometimes whole paragraphs or pages. Thus I have added a section on the William Shakeshafte [. . .]' ¹⁶⁵ This comment, though brief, is important. In 1975 Schoenbaum did not even mention the Lancastrian theories. Only two years later (1977) he added a section on them. What made him change his mind between 1975 and 1977? It remains a mystery. Yet we can at least point out that by 1977 Schoenbaum acknowledged that he could no longer ignore the theories.

For Schoenbaum the theories were merely 'intriguing suggestion[s]'. ¹⁶⁶ He presented four reasons to reject the identification of Shakeshafte with Shakespeare. Firstly, he contended, as he did in his 1970 *Shakespeare's Lives*, that the surname of Shakespeare's grandfather, Richard, was not recorded as 'Shakeshafte', as Baker, Chambers, and Keen had thought. This time Schoenbaum added more details. In 1914, Charlotte Carmichael Stopes published her *Shakespeare's Environment*, in which she reported that she had found a 'Richard Shakeshafte' in a record from the court rolls of the College of St. Mary in Warwick. Since the manor involved lay in Snitterfield, she thought the reference to be Shakespeare's grandfather under a variant surname, and this assumption was accepted after her publication. ¹⁶⁷ Schoenbaum, however, protested that Stopes's reading was inaccurate. '[T]here is the demon of inaccuracy', Schoenbaum warned, 'that pursued Mrs. Stopes. In the Snitterfield manorial record

¹⁶⁵ *Compact Documentary Life*, pp. 115, vii, and 112 respectively.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

¹⁶⁷ *Shakespeare's Environment* (London: G. Bell, 1914), p. 18.

she has not only got the date wrong [. . .] but has also misread Richard's surname, which appears as "Shakestaff", not "Shakeshafte". What is more, there is 'no evidence of anybody in the poet's family using "Shakeshafte" as a variant'.¹⁶⁸

The other three reasons which Schoenbaum pointed out were summaries of Hamer's counter-arguments. The play-clothes mentioned in Hoghton's will, thought to have been actors' costumes, 'could as well have decked out musicians'. Farington's original reference — 'S^r Tho. Hesketh plaiers went awaie' — does not contain any possessive. Schoenbaum suggested that Farington referred not to Hesketh's players but to 'the fact that both Hesketh and the players left at the same time'. Schoenbaum, however, failed to identify any entry in *The Derby Household Books* recording the name of the patron of these players who left at the same time as Hesketh. Unfortunately, Schoenbaum remained (and, regrettably, since he died in 1996, will remain) silent. Finally, Schoenbaum exhibited Hamer's 'tontine' argument, which he regarded as a 'devastating point'. He praised Hamer for his 'application of remorseless logic to a sixteenth-century testament'.¹⁶⁹

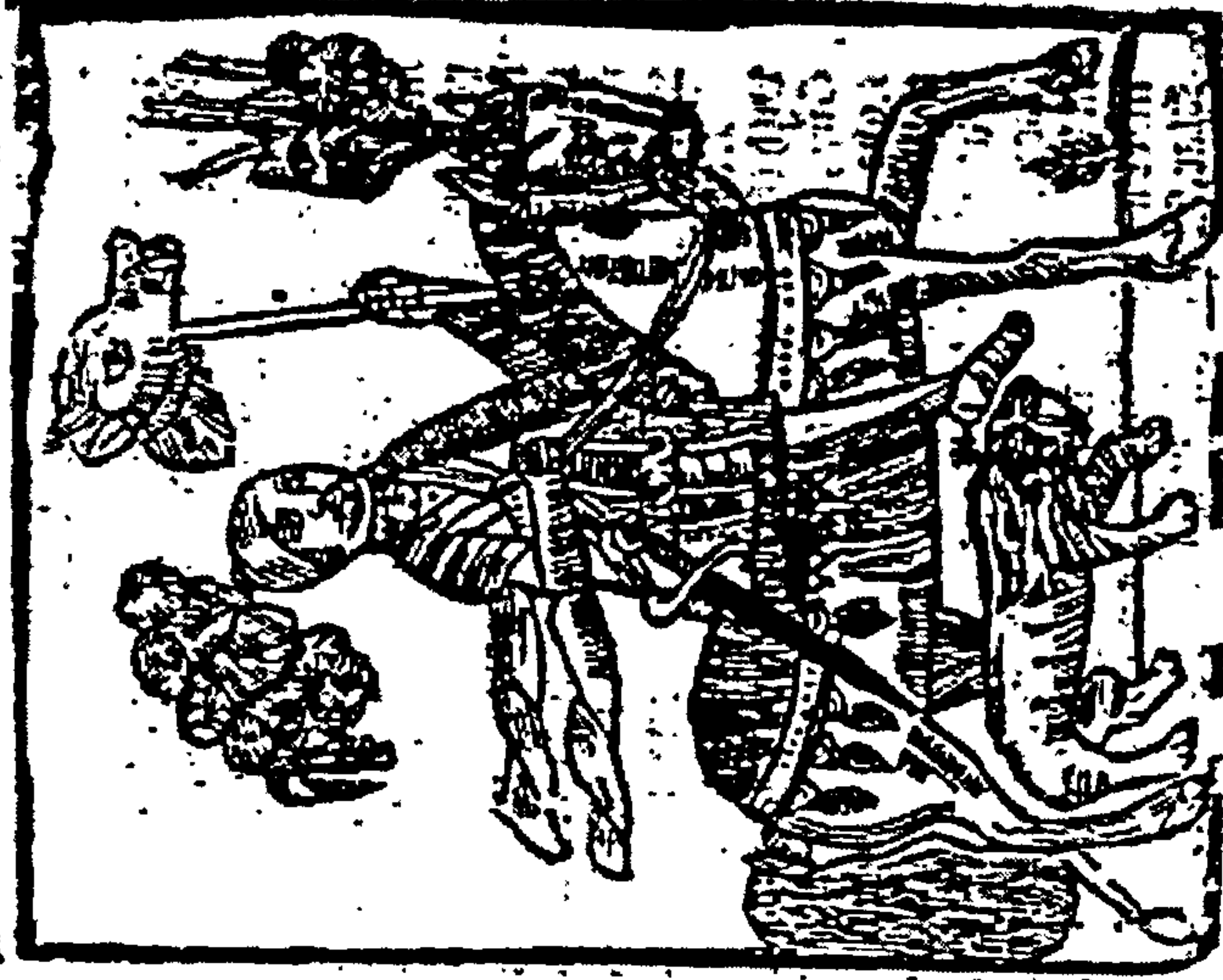
¹⁶⁸ *Compact Documentary Life*, p. 114.

¹⁶⁹ *Compact Documentary Life*, p. 114.

The Famous HISTORY
OF
GUY Earl of WARWICK.

By Samuel Smilson.

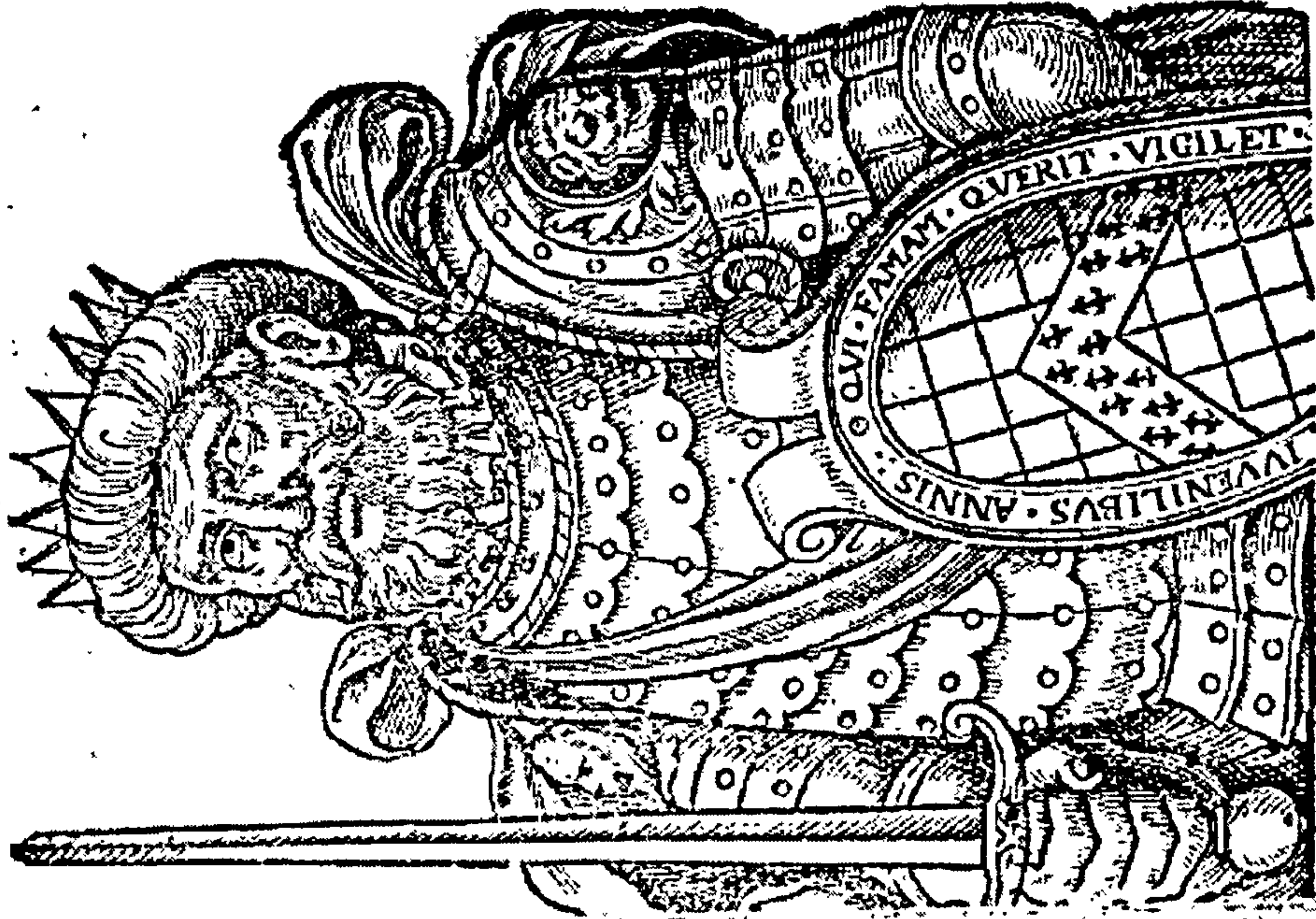
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London, Printed for F. Coler, T. Viner, J. W. Smith,
and J. Clarke.

Bought at a sale 1687

1. The Famous History of Guy Earl of Warwick (1600)



THE HISTORIE OF THE

conquests of the puissant conquerour
GUY.

I Am Guy the Barron bold, of borne the dauntlesse knight
Whom in my daies in England was, with shield on speare in fight.
An English man I am by birth, in faith a Christian true:
The whicher lawes of Iudels I bisterie eschue.
As the humblye tunicke wears and one after Christ his birth,
Whom King Athelstone wore the ermine, I leued upon earth.
Sometime I was of Warwicke Castle, and (so) to say the truth
A ladies love did me constrain to dwell in my youth
As in me same in tents of armes, in strange and lonesome landes,
Where I achieued for his sake great conquests with my handes.
I first I saild to Normandie, and there I was in fight
The Emperours daughter of Almaine from meinte a worthy knight.
Also in Lombardie my selfe, with thise knights and no more,
Sole to Britons Lombards bringe ambuscage to murder me before.
Through fals Duke Ottom tracherie, who bare me most fall pale,
Cause of the wound I gaue to him in Normandie of late.
When passed I the seas to Greece, to helpe the Emperour fight
Against the mighty Souldans host of Persia to fight:
Where I in hill of Saracens and Paimus maide a man,
And slew the Souldans cousin eke, who had to name Coldran.
And Esclard a famous knight to death I did pursue:
And Elman King of Tine also, most horrible to be.
I went into the Souldans host, upon ambassage sent,
And brought his head away with me, having also him in his tent.
There was a Dragon in that land, which also I did slay,
As he a lion my pursue most fiercely by the way.
As Almaine spere I did retire, and thence to Lorraine fight,
Where I the Duke of Paimie killd, in stratagem to requite.
When into England I did saile to see the bright,
For love of whom I travell'd so far, to see my might.
And when I had espoused her, I waite but for the dale,
G.

2. Guy of Warwick as one of the nine Worthies, in Richard Lloyd, *A briefe discourse of the most renowned actes and right valiant conquests of those puissant Princes, called the Nine worthies* (1584)



3. Collegiate Church of St. Bartholomew (Tong, Shropshire)



4. Two halves of the epitaph on the tomb of the Stanley family



5. Tomb of the Stanley family



6. The Stanley monument (before the pyramids were moved to the top)

Catholicising Shakespeare: The Lancastrian Theories II From the 1980s to Today

I. The 1980s: Revival and Challenges

E[rnst] A. J. Honigmann

The counter-arguments presented by Hamer and Schoenbaum appeared invincible for fifteen years — that is, until 1985 when the corpus of the Lancastrian theories breaks a 15-year silence — E. A. J Honigmann's *Shakespeare: The 'Lost Years'*. Honigmann cautiously noted that his 'book was a detective-story', and the second edition (1998) added that the suggestions made in the story 'all deserve further investigations'.¹

Hamer had protested that there was no reason for Shakespeare to use an alias. Honigmann, on the other hand, considered it 'misleading' to think of 'Shakeshafte' as an alias. As Keen had suggested, Honigmann argued that since names were not fixed but alterable in the sixteenth century, and in Lancashire the familiar name was Shakeshafte, 'it would not be surprising if a name as unusual (in this area) as Shakespeare were assimilated, or perhaps merely confused by the scrivener in 1581'.²

Honigmann brought in a legal colleague's opinion about the bequests in Hoghton's will. D. W. Elliott had advised Honigmann that the provisions in the will should not be regarded as an early non-subscription tontine, as Hamer had previously suggested. Elliott explained that a tontine had been 'an early form of life insurance, very crude and with a strong element of gambling', by which 'no participant enjoyed anything unless and until he became the last survivor, when he

¹ *Shakespeare: The 'Lost Years'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985; 2nd edn, 1998): 1st edn, p. vii; 2nd edn, p. x.

² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

took the whole capital'. In other words, 'annuities took no part in the scheme at all'. Moreover, Elliott insisted that it was nonsense 'to deduce the ages of annuitants from the comparative size of the annuities given to them' as Hamer had done, for other aspects to be considered include: 'satisfaction with the servant, long service by the servant, status of the servant . . . other resources of the servant . . .' Elliott declared that he 'would be most unconvinced by any reconstruction of servants' comparative ages from their comparative bequests'.³ Honigmann commented that Elliott 'pretty well dispose[d] of Hamer's argument'.⁴

Honigmann backed up Elliott's second argument by examining later law-suits in which Alexander Hoghton's servants named in his will appeared as deponents and stated their ages. Thomas Costen, in a deposition of 1586, gave his age as thirty-four. Henry Bond, in the same deposition stated that he was then sixty. Thomas Barton was a deponent in another law suit, and was aged about fifty in 1587. To summarise their ages in 1581:

Thomas Costen	29
Thomas Barton	44
Henry Bond	55

In Alexander's will Costen was one of the annuitants and was given an annuity of £1, while Barton and Bond were left no specified sums. According to Hamer's theory, argued Honigmann, Costen would have to be older than Barton and Bond. Since the figures did not support Hamer's argument, Honigmann concluded that 'Hamer's [tontine] argument collapses'.⁵

Hamer's one other counter-argument was that 'play-clothes' in Hoghton's will referred to costumes for musicians, not for actors. Honigmann, giving an example of

³ Quoted in Honigmann, pp. 16–7.
⁴ *Shakespeare: The 'Lost Years'*, p. 17
⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17. Honigmann's argument was challenged by Robert Bearman in 2002. See section III below.

Richard Jones's sale of 'playing apparel, play-books, instruments and other commodities' to Edward Alleyn in 1589, demonstrated that actors at this time had been 'all-purpose entertainers'; actors were also acrobats and musicians. He insisted that 'the natural interpretation' of Hoghton's bequest should be that 'he kept a group of "players" who produced plays, or who made music and sometimes produced plays'.⁶ He pointed out that 'all manner of play-clothes' suggested a set of costumes used for theatrical entertainments by Alexander's players.

Hamer objected that *The Derby Household Books* did not prove the existence of Sir Thomas' players, as Chambers had previously suggested. Honigmann, however, argued:

the real important point is that Alexander Hoghton, though uncertain whether or not his brother [Thomas] would want to keep players, ordained that if Thomas [. . .] declined then Sir Thomas Hesketh 'shall have' the instruments and play-clothes; that is he knew that Hesketh would take them, presumably because Hesketh kept players.⁷

Honigmann suggested that Alexander Hoghton must have commended Gyllome and Shakeshafte to Sir Thomas because Sir Thomas had a special interest in which his half-brother could not rival him — that is, Sir Thomas's patronage of players.

Honigmann also drew attention to the structure of the section where Shakeshafte's name appears: a single 'Item' covers 'three *related* matters'.⁸ In this 'three-part bequest' Alexander is concerned about his players (so Honigmann believe them to be) and their future. Honigmann thus concluded that Alexander had mentioned Gyllome and Shakeshafte after his two other requests because they were 'connected in his [Alexander's] mind with his players'.⁹

⁶ Ibid., p. 18.

⁷ Ibid., p. 19.

⁸ Honigmann, p. 19 (emphasis added). As I have summarised in the previous chapter, they are: (1) the instruments and play-clothes are to pass to his half-brother, Thomas, if he will keep Alexander's players; (2) if he declines, they go to Sir Thomas; and (3) Sir Thomas is asked to employ Gyllome and Shakeshafte or to commend them to another good master.

⁹ Honigmann, p. 19.

There remains, however, a possibility that in Alexander's mind a new employment for Gyllome and Shakeshafte is not directly connected to Alexander's bequest of his instruments and play-clothes. Honigmann paid attention only to the structure of the single section where Shakeshafte first appears. But we need to examine the structure of the will and testament as a whole. In the will and testament the formal invocation and the declaration of the identity of the testator are followed by his instructions concerning the burial and those regarding his debts. Then follow a series of bequests. This standard format is crucial, for each 'Item' concerns bequests of Alexander's money, personal goods and estates. The will and testament does not concern any recommendation of his servants to other masters except for Gyllome and Shakeshafte. Since Sir Thomas, whom Alexander trusted to arrange for the future employment of the two servants, is named only where Alexander bequeaths instruments and play-clothes to him, this is the only place in the will and testament for the testator to make a request concerning the new employment of the two servants. These aspects of the structure of Alexander's will and testament thus seem to suggest that the connection in Alexander's mind may have been simply that between Sir Thomas and the new employment of the two servants.

Honigmann assumed that Shakespeare could have been recommended as 'an assistant teacher' to Alexander Hoghton by John Cottom in 1579 or 1580 and that he could have been drawn into theatre thereafter.¹⁰ He suggested 'the following reconstruction of events':

John Cottom, recently arrived in Stratford as the new schoolmaster, hears that a Lancashire magnate, landlord to Cottom's own father and a near neighbour of his, needs a master to teach the children in his large household. Cottom recommends William Shakespeare, a brilliant boy of sixteen or so whose father is going through hard times. On his arrival the new schoolmaster, an admirer of Terence and Plautus, quickly teams up with Hoghton's players, and [. . .] impresses Hoghton [. . .]¹¹

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 19–20.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 21.

Although Eric Sams comments that the theory based on the Cottom connection is ‘not implausible’,¹² the main weakness of Honigmann’s ‘reconstruction’ is that it is actually a chain of hypotheses for which he has no evidence: (1) The Hoghtons of Lea were looking for a private tutor for their children at this very time; (2) Cottom’s father, Lawrence, either directly or indirectly heard of the news (1); (3) Lawrence informed his son; (4) John Cottom knew or taught Shakespeare at the Stratford grammar school; (5) Cottom recommended Shakespeare to the Hoghtons as an ‘assistant teacher’; (6) Shakespeare’s theatrical talent impressed Alexander. What is more, speculation (6) is Bardolatry.

Moreover, it is likely that Honigmann’s whole argument contains a great danger: he may have been reading Shakespeare’s early years into the circumstantial evidence instead of reading them out of it. Honigmann attempted to support his theory by demonstrating that the Hoghtons of Lea in older generations as well as other Hoghton families kept unlicensed schoolmasters. This evidence, however, does not prove that the Hoghtons were looking for a new schoolmaster for their children in 1579 or 1580 when, according to Honigmann’s speculation, Shakespeare may have been recommended to the Catholic household as an ‘assistant teacher’. Honigmann also argued that ‘Catholic families, as well as illegally harbouring priests, frequently maintained unlicensed schoolmasters’ and that ‘this was particularly common in Lancashire’. He named two ‘precocious boys of sixteen or so’ who worked as schoolmasters (Simon Forman and Patrick Bronte) in order to justify his contention that ‘[o]thers have done it, so why not Shakespeare?’¹³ Yet Honigmann’s argument falls into the same problem: Shakespeare may have been able to teach, but it does not

¹² *The Real Shakespeare: Retrieving the Early Years, 1564-1594* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 37–8 (p. 37).

¹³ Honigmann, pp. 19–20.

prove (and there is no evidence) that the Hoghtons were looking for a private tutor. Honigmann repeated Shield's view that 'John Cotham' named in Hoghton's will 'may well be' the schoolmaster from Stratford.¹⁴

Honigmann's suggestion of the link between Shakeshafte/Shakespeare and Sir Thomas Hesketh is also dominated by speculation. He discovered that the Gyllome who appears in Hoghton's will 'seems to have become' a servant of Sir Thomas Hesketh, as Hoghton wished, for among documents preserved in the Hesketh archives 'foulke gillame' appears as a witness of a feoffment in 1591, and 'ffoulke Gillam' as a witness of a conveyance in 1608. But we may wonder if this evidence does in fact identify him as a servant or player in the Hesketh household. Honigmann notes that there were other witnesses in the 1591 case. Were they all servants of Sir Thomas? Honigmann believed that Shakeshafte might have 'soon moved on to other employment' *if* he accompanied Gyllome to Rufford after Alexander's death because his master, as Keen had pointed out three decades before, was arrested for recusancy.¹⁵

Honigmann's account has a weakness. He believed that Gyllome 'seems to have become' a servant in the Hesketh household. We may wonder how Gyllome, if he did in fact serve Hesketh, could continue to serve his master after his master's arrest while, according to Honigmann's theory, the incident prevented Shakeshafte from continuing *his* service. It may be conjectured that the two servants may have left after the arrest of Sir Thomas, and that Gyllome may have come back after Sir Thomas was released (though we do not know when the release took place), while Shakeshafte, who '*we may assume*, wished to specialise in drama', not music, was

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 34–5.

recommended to the earl of Derby or Lord Strange, who kept players.¹⁶ But this account not only adds another speculation (Shakeshafte wished to specialise in drama) to a scenario that already rests heavily on other speculations, but also reads Shakespeare's connection with Derby and Lord Strange into, not out of, those speculations.

It is reported that Cuthbert de Hoghton, father of Sir Bernard, saw the Hoghton crest on some instruments at Rufford, where Sir Thomas Hesketh lived. Some of them were stored at Easton Neston, but none of them carried the Hoghton crest. Honigmann therefore had no means to identify any of them with the instruments listed in Alexander Hoghton's will, or to estimate how old the instruments with the Hoghton crests may have been. I do not mean to doubt the de Hoghton story. Yet it should be pointed out that even if Sir Thomas kept Hoghton's instruments, it does not prove that Shakeshafte moved to Rufford because, as I have already argued, the instruments and Shakeshafte may not have been connected in Hoghton's mind, although they are closely related in Honigmann's.¹⁷

Honigmann argued that neither Alexander Hoghton nor Sir Thomas Hesketh 'would have engaged him [Shakeshafte/Shakespeare] as a "servant" [. . .] unless they felt certain' that he was a Catholic. He believed that Shakespeare 'must have changed his religion probably before the end of the 1580s'. To understand the anti-Catholic tone of some of Shakespeare's plays, Honigmann drew attention to the Stanley family:

[the earl's] family [. . .] included an embarrassing number of known or suspected Catholics [. . .] The Earl, we may suppose, persecuted recusants partly because he felt he had to prove himself. [. . .] Lord Strange, commended by the Privy Council in 1587 for his diligence against recusants, no doubt felt equally incriminated by his family and by his Catholic friends in Lancashire.¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 39 (emphasis added).

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 32–3.

¹⁸ *Shakespeare: The 'Lost Years'*, p. 119.

Honigmann argued that both Derby and Lord Strange felt it necessary to demonstrate their loyalty to the crown, and that Lord Strange used his company as a means to hide his Catholic sympathy beneath the ‘unmistakable anti-Catholic bias’ in Shakespeare’s plays.¹⁹

It is true that many of Derby’s close relatives and of the other families with whom he was associated in the county are known to have been Catholics. Thomas Stanley of Winwick, Derby’s brother, was a Catholic. His sisters, daughters of his stepmother, Margaret, countess of Derby, were also Catholics, as were his brothers-in-law, Lord Stafford and Morley, Sir John Arundell and Sir Nicholas Pointz. Derby was in such a close relationship with many Catholic members of his own family that suspicion fell on himself in 1570. On 24 August the earl of Huntingdon wrote:

There is great expectation amongst the papists of Lancashire and Cheshire that the Earl of Derby will play as fond a part this year as the two earls did last year. He hath hitherto been loyal but has at this time many wicked counsellors. There is one Browne, a conjurer in his h[ouse], kept secretly. Uphalle, who was a pirate and had lately his pardon, could tell somewhat. He that carried Lord Morley over was also there within this se’nnight kept secretly.²⁰

Huntingdon’s information is based upon a report from an informer named Ashby. The validity of Ashby’s report is problematic, as little suspicion of disloyalty was ever attached to Derby. J. Stanley Leatherbarrow insists that disloyalty on Derby’s part was ‘a figment of the imagination of “some faithful and wise spy”’.²¹

Derby did not need to make efforts to prove himself. Apart from such rumours as the one just cited, evidence seems to suggest that he was loyal to the crown and faithful to the re-established religion. At the age of sixteen he was knighted at Edward

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 119.

²⁰ Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Salisbury Manuscripts*, XIII, p. 100. Quoted in J. Stanley Leatherbarrow, *The Lancashire Elizabethan Recusants*, Remains Historical and Literary Connected with the Palatine Counties of Lancashire and Chester, New Series 110 (Manchester: Chetham Society, 1947), p. 43.

²¹ Leatherbarrow, p. 44.

VI's coronation and appointed one of the king's gentlemen of the privy chamber.²²

Until 1571, before his father had become too ill, Henry spent his life in and around the Protestant court. On 6 December 1571 Queen Elizabeth wrote a letter of sympathy to Henry. After 1571 Elizabeth relied on him to ensure that her will should prevail in the north-western counties. In 1572 the conservative third earl of Derby was succeeded by his son, Henry, who was more open to the reformist influence of the court. The new earl was the principal player in the ecclesiastical commissions for the hunting down of recusants. The Spanish ambassador — needless to say, he was a Catholic — called Derby a 'passionate heretic'.²³

In fact, 'as the government gradually relinquished much hope of getting strong action out of the Bishop of Chester, the initiative falls more and more on the earl who is frequently thanked by the authorities for his energetic action'.²⁴ In June and November 1574 the queen's council urged Derby, Bishop Downham of Chester and other members of the ecclesiastical commissioners to take firmer action against recusants. In the letter to the earl dated 27 July 1574, the Privy Council thanked him for his activities in dealing with religious disorders in Lancashire: 'His respite to make more full certificate is very well liked in respect that the same tendeth to root out the bottom of such abuses in that country, being very sick of Popery, where more unlawful acts have been committed and more unlawful person holden secret then in any other part of the realm [. . .]'.²⁵

On 2 December 1581 the Privy Council praised the earl's continuing labours to hunt recusants: the queen 'doth so accept of your lordships' service in that country that next unto God's goodness', and 'thinketh your lordship to have been the principal

²² J. J. Bagley, *The Earls of Derby 1485–1985* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1985), p. 54.

²³ Quoted in Christopher Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 259.

²⁴ Leatherbarrow, p. 44.

²⁵ *Acts of the Privy Council*, VIII, p. 302.

cause of the staying of the country from falling to popery, by the good assistance of the bishop, and the great pains taken in the execution of the commission directed unto you'.²⁶ In February 1592 the earl instructed the justices of peace to arrest all persistent recusants. Many of them were interrogated by Derby himself, and those considered most dangerous were sent to London. Others were committed to Lancaster gaol, and recusant widows were imprisoned in Radcliffe Tower. The wives and daughters of recusant knights and esquires were to be placed in the custody of reliable gentry, and the rest were to be imprisoned. The intensity of Derby's recusant hunt was such that some priests fled into Cumbria.²⁷ On 30 October 1592 Elizabeth wrote to the earl that she had 'long had good proof of his fidelity' and 'thank[ed] him for his late sincerity in the discovery of a number of evil-disposed persons, detected in favouring and maintaining seminaries and Jesuits in Lancashire'.²⁸

In 1586 Henry also sat as one of nine earls commissioned to try Mary, Queen of Scots, on a charge of treason at Fotheringhay, Northamptonshire. On 24 September 1588 Henry wrote to his senior deputy lieutenant in each hundred informing him of the wreck of Spanish ships off the Irish coast. J. J. Bagley comments: 'The very language of this letter reveals Earl Henry's religious beliefs and practice. Unlike his father and many of his Lancashire neighbours, he did not regret England's breach with Rome'.²⁹ Derby believed it necessary that English people should avow their loyalty to the queen by regularly attending the church. In his later years he encouraged his servants and retainers to attend the local parish church as the act of Uniformity ordered.³⁰

²⁶ Francis Peck, ed., *Desiderata Curiosa* (1732; new edn, 1779), vol. 1, lib. 4, number 27, p. 140.

²⁷ Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire*, pp. 288–9; Bagley, p. 62.

²⁸ *CSP, Domestic*, vol. 243, number 51.

²⁹ P. 59.

³⁰ *Acts of the Privy Council*, XIX, pp. 337–40 (25 July 1590).

Henry may have felt it distasteful to prosecute his close friends and relatives who remained faithful to the Roman church. Derby's son, Ferdinando, was more resolute against recusants. In Lancashire and Cheshire Ferdinando served as Lord Lieutenant. His letter (dated 16 December 1583) to Bishop Chadderton demonstrates his readiness to proceed against recusants:

[. . .] noe man shall shewe himself more forward [than myself], to assist [your lordship] with my [ut]most indevor. Nether shall anie man set his foote before me in anie whatsoever service belonging to her majestie; but [I] will saie with Alexander, 'Strike the citie of Theabes for disloialtie'. To which walls (I meane, these rebellious minded papists) my self will be willinge to geve the first blowe.³¹

In February 1588 after his father was sent to the French court as Elizabeth's special ambassador, Ferdinando was put in charge of the apprehension of recusants, especially those dangerous to the queen.³²

Towards the end of 1593 Ferdinando's fortune began to fall. Speculation concerning Elizabeth's successor was growing, and various rumours were circulating. She was sixty years old and had no direct heir. Catholics both in England and abroad were anxiously looking for a candidate who would restore the old faith in the next reign. Ferdinando's father was a descendant of Edward III, and his mother was descended from Henry VII. Although Ferdinando was faithful to the Church of England, in the spring of 1591 Parsons sent two semissaries, John Cecil (alias John Snowden) and John Fixer (alias Thomas Wilson) to Lancashire to discover if it would be practicable to promote Ferdinando's candidature to the throne as a Catholic king. Fixer later confessed that Sir William Stanley of Hooton 'thinks yt in only my L. Strange Catholiques can have hope' after the queen's death.³³ Earl Henry's death in November 1593 and Ferdinando's accession to the earldom intensified Sir William's

³¹ Transcribed in Peck, vol. 1, lib. 4, no. 28, pp. 141–2 (p. 141).

³² *Acts of the Privy Council*, XV, pp. 361–2.

³³ Quoted in Barry Coward, *The Stanleys, Lords Stanley and Earls of Derby 1385–1672: The Origins, Wealth and Power of a Landowning Family*, Remains Historical and Literary Connected with the Palatine Counties of Lancaster and Chester (Manchester: Manchester University Press for Chetham Society, 1983), p. 146.

hope. He sent Richard Hesketh, the youngest son of Gabriel Hesketh of Aughton, to propose to Ferdinando a plot aimed at the usurpation of the queen by Ferdinando as a king and the restoration of Catholicism in England. Ferdinando exposed Hesketh, and the conspirator was arrested and investigated by the Council. The Councillors interviewed Bartholomew Hesketh, Richard's eldest brother. On 24 November Sir John Puckering, the Lord Keeper, informed Sir Robert Cecil that although the queen was glad that Ferdinando had arrested Hesketh and exposed the plot, she would prefer to have independent witness of Ferdinando's meetings with Hesketh. By the end of the month the Council seemed satisfied that it had obtained the information from Hesketh and his brother and ordered his execution for treason.³⁴ Yet it appears that Ferdinando never regained the queen's trust until his death. He asked Sir Robert Cecil to persuade his father 'to move her Highness for me' concerning the two positions lord lieutenant of Lancashire and Cheshire and chamberlain of Chester, the positions that his father had held.³⁵ But Elizabeth never appointed him to either post. She may have intended to do so in due course, but from 5 or 6 April 1594 he started suffering from 'vomiting of sour or rusty matter and blood, the yellow jaundice, melting of his fat, swelling and hardness of his spleen, a vehement hiccough, and [. . .] stopping of his water', and died at Lathom just ten days later.³⁶

In the winter of 1593–4 Ferdinando may have felt it necessary to prove his loyalty to the queen. But he did not need to labour to prove himself before the exposure of the Hesketh affair, and the documentary evidence demonstrates clear vindication of the character of Derby and Lord Strange from suspicion of their Catholic faith and disloyalty to the queen. Honigmann's portrayal of Derby and Lord Strange, then, shows only a small part of their faces, presenting a distorted image of

³⁴ *Salisbury*, IV, pp. 408 and 461–3; V, pp. 58–9.

³⁵ Quoted in Bagley, p. 66.

³⁶ John Stow, quoted in Martin Wiggins, 'A Strange Death', *Around the Globe* 24 (2003), 22–3 (p. 23).

the father and the son that fits comfortably into the Catholic narrative of Honigmann's Lancastrian theory.

The attack on Shakespeare in *Groats-worth of witte* implies that by 1592 Shakespeare was 'already a dominant figure in the theatre'. Honigmann suggested that this could not have happened if Shakespeare had only begun to write plays in 1590–1. He insisted that by 1592 Shakespeare already enjoyed 'a very special social position in Lord Strange's circle', and that this could explain why the author of *Groats-worth of witte* (for Honigmann, it is Greene) singled him out 'as the central figure amongst "those puppets"'.³⁷ Honigmann thus laboured to demonstrate that Shakespeare might have enjoyed a career as a playwright for Lord Strange's company in the 1580s and the opening years of the 1590s by proposing early dates for some of Shakespeare's works.³⁸

Honigmann's most radical attempt to revise the chronology of Shakespeare's works may be his dating of 'Let the bird of loudest lay'. Carleton Brown had previously identified the turtledove and the phoenix in Chester's *Loves Martyr* with his patron and dedicatee (John Salisbury of Llewenni, Denbighshire) and his wife, Ursula *née* Halsall or Stanley, an illegitimate, but acknowledged, daughter of Henry Stanley, fourth earl of Derby.³⁹ Honigmann extended Brown's identification of the two birds in Chester's poem to Shakespeare's.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 71.

³⁸ See appendix G.

³⁹ Carleton Brown, introduction to *Poems by Sir John Salusbury and Robert Chester*, Bryn Mawr College Monograph Series 14 (Bryn Mawr: Bryn Mawr College, 1913); repr. Early English Text Society Extra Series 113 (London: Kegan Paul; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1914), pp. liv–lxxiv ('The Allegory in *Loves Martyr*'). Alexander B. Grosart was utterly convinced that the phoenix was Queen Elizabeth and the turtle the earl of Essex (introduction to *Robert Chester's "Loves Martyr, or, Rosalins Complaint" (1601)*, ed. by Grosart (London: N. Trübner, 1878), pp. v–ixxiii, especially pp. xxi–xlv). William H. Matchett supported Grosart's allegorical interpretation although the dates were wrong. He argued that Elizabeth effectively died with Essex: 'Though the Queen lived on, in losing Essex she had, it might be thought, lost her future' ('*The Phoenix and the Turtle*': *Shakespeare's Poem and Chester's 'Loves Martyr* (London: Mouton, 1965), p. 193). Elizabeth Watson argued that while the phoenix stood for the queen, the turtle did not need to represent anyone particular: 'the allegory operates on the spiritual plane. [. . .] the emphasis is on the consummation of the Phoenix's virginal

What is more, Honigmann emphasised Shakespeare's own acquaintance with the Salusburys, which Keen had pointed out over three decades before.⁴⁰ Honigmann's own study supported Keen's: in *The Derby Household Books* Honigmann found 'Mr Salusbury' (as he then was; he was knighted in June 1601) having visited Derby 'now and then at the same time as Hoghtons, Heskethes and others who probably knew William Shakeshafte at Lea or Rufford'. Robert Parry recorded that William Stanley, sixth earl of Derby, and his countess came to Lleweni, the Salusbury family's residence.⁴¹ For Honigmann, it was Shakespeare's Lancashire connection that brought him into the scene.

What differentiated Honigmann from Keen was the former biographer's proposition that Shakespeare could have written the poem for the wedding of Ursula to Salusbury in December 1586. As we have seen, Ursula and her husband kept in touch with her father and half-brothers after their wedding. Honigmann thus proposed a reconstruction of events in December 1586:

nuptials in death rather than on any personal relationship of the Queen's' ('Natural History in *Love's Martyr*', *Renaissance and Modern Studies* 8 (1964), 109–29 (p. 124)). Marie Axton, applying Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz's theory presented in his *The King's Two Bodies*, argued that the key relationship in Shakespeare's poem was that between the queen and her subjects, both being represented by either bird (*The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession*, *Studies in History* 5 (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), p. 119). Anthea Hume argued that *Loves Martyr* and the fourteen poems appended to it portrayed the earl of Essex as a false turtle representing false love ('*Love's Martyr*, "The Phoenix and the Turtle", and the Aftermath of the Essex Rebellion', *Review of English Studies* 40 (1989), 48–71). Roy T. Eriksen, on the other hand, identified the turtle with Giordano Bruno ("Un certo amoroso martire": Shakespeare's "The Phoenix and the Turtle" and Giordano Bruno's *De gli eroici furori*' *Spenser Studies* 2 (1981), 193–215. The mythical bird was introduced in English poetry in the eighth or ninth century when an anonymous poet translated Lactantius's *Phoenix* as an allegory of Christ. The popularity of the phoenix in Elizabethan poetry is owing largely to Petrarch, who compared Laura with the mythical bird, and to French sonneteers who continuously used the imagery. The phoenix represents Queen Elizabeth in Thomas Churchyard's *Challenge* (1593), and in the same year an anthology of poems entitled *The Phoenix Nest* was published (STC 21516). See Hyder Edward Rollins, introduction to *The Phoenix Nest* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), pp. ix–xliii. More recently, Clare Asquith suggested that Shakespeare's birds were spiritually married Catholics, and named several candidates including William Byrd, Henry Garnet, Robert Southwell, and Henry Walpole ('A Phoenix for Palm Sunday: Was Shakespeare's Poem a Requiem for Catholic Martyrs?', *TLS*, 13 April 2001, pp. 14–5).

⁴⁰ See my discussion in chapter 3.

⁴¹ *Shakespeare: The 'Lost Years'*, p. 91; Parry, quoted in Honigmann, *Shakespeare: The 'Lost Years'*, p. 91. Honigmann wrote that Ursula and her husband 'remained in close touch with her father and half-brothers', implying that Ursula's husband was already acquainted with the earl and his sons (p. 91, emphasis added). Honigmann, however, did not provide us with any evidence for Salusbury's pre-existing relationship with them before his marriage to Ursula.

William Shakespeare arrives with the Derby entourage a few days before the wedding, perhaps to take part in an entertainment on the wedding-day, hears that various family friends have written poems for the bride and groom, meets Robert Chester, reads Chester's verses — and decides that this is an opportunity to show what he can do. Characteristically, he competes with the poetical opposition on its own terms, adopting the 'phoenix and turtle' story and the mystical-allusive manner of Robert Chester [. . .]⁴²

Honigmann argued further that this occasional poem disclosed 'an insight into Shakespeare's social standing' in the 1580s. According to Honigmann, 'the other poetical offerings came from gentlemen or (as in the case of Robert Chester) from scholarly retainers'; the poem, therefore, indicates that young Shakespeare saw himself 'not as a mere servant but as a retainer who could mix with his social superiors'.⁴³

Salisbury fell into a series of troubled events at the end of the 1590s, and his honour and fame were denigrated by his opponents who saw him as a monstrous beast that was hungry for political power. Honigmann thus conjectured that Chester had decided to publish his *Loves Martyr* that had depicted him years ago as the turtledove, 'humblest and gentlest of birds', so as 'to influence public opinion'. According to Honigmann's rather fanciful speculation, Chester 'luckily' kept Shakespeare's poem with his own, and thereupon solicited more poems from Jonson, Chapman and Marston.⁴⁴

While Ian Wilson has found Honigmann's suggestion 'more convincing than most', John Roe comments that it 'weaves a more than usually elaborate conjectural tissue'.⁴⁵ One reason why it is difficult to swallow Honigmann's theory is that Shakespeare's poem clearly states that the phoenix and the turtledove left no posterity (l. 59). Honigmann attempts to justify this by arguing that Shakespeare wrote the

⁴² Ibid., p. 109.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 110.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 93–101 (p. 101).

⁴⁵ Wilson, *Shakespeare: The Evidence*, p. 288; Roe, introduction to *The Poems* by William Shakespeare, New Cambridge Shakespeare Series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 48.

poem before the wedding — that is, before the birth of Jane Salusbury.⁴⁶ But a poem describing the phoenix and the turtledove (representing, according to Honigmann, Ursula and Salusbury) as being childless seems inappropriate to be a ‘poetical offering’ to the newly wedded couple. Shakespeare also uses the past tense throughout the poem, while Ursula and her bridegroom were still alive. Furthermore, Shakespeare’s poem, as we have already seen, belongs to the group of poems described on their title-page as ‘new compositions’. Honigmann argued that the term meant ‘more “modern”’ than such older material as ‘the venerable Italian Torquato Caeliano’, whom Chester purports to have translated.⁴⁷ But Roe points out that it was ‘a customary publisher’s device’ to advertise work as the most recent so as to attract readers.⁴⁸

Honigmann utterly neglected to examine if the style of Shakespeare’s poem was characteristic of poetry written in the mid-1580s. Contrasting Shakespeare’s poem to the eighth song in Sir Philip Sidney’s *Astrophil and Stella*, Roe points out that Sidney’s poem bears ‘a more obvious, hence more reduced referential focus than the enigmatic, emblematic terms of Shakespeare’s’, and the ‘lapidary, gnomic manner’ of Shakespeare’s poem is characteristic rather of Metaphysical poetry than of the Sidneian style.⁴⁹ Colin Burrow similarly comments that ‘[w]hile it is not quite true to say, with [William] Empson, that “Let the bird of loudest lay” is Shakespeare’s “only consistent use of the Metaphysical style” [. . .] Shakespeare’s poem is clearly pushing in the direction of an innovative and abstract poetic vocabulary’.⁵⁰ These features in Shakespeare’s poem are not the habitual poetic styles of the mid-1580s. It seems unlikely that Shakespeare wrote the poem as a wedding gift in December 1586.

⁴⁶ Honigmann, pp. 105–9.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 101.

⁴⁸ Introduction, p. 48.

⁴⁹ Introduction, p. 48.

⁵⁰ Introduction to ‘Let the bird of loudest lay’, p. 88.

Honigmann asked: ‘Why, I wonder, would Shakespeare read this obscure and interminable collection of poems, unless he was interested in the Salusbury family, in whose honour it was composed?’⁵¹ For Honigmann, this was a rhetorical question: Shakespeare wrote the poem because he was personally associated with the Salusburys through his Lancashire connection. But Shakespeare may have wished to help Ben Jonson, who was still a fledgling dramatist, to obtain Salusbury’s literary patronage and its rewards. As we have seen in chapter 3, Shakespeare’s own poem appeared as the fifth in the group of fourteen poems otherwise by Marston, Chapman, Ben Jonson, and an anonymous poet, and the poems were dedicated to Salusbury. The political events of 1601 in which Robert Devereux, earl of Essex, was engaged had a major literary consequence, for he was a powerful literary patron of many poets. Jonson was seeking Essex’s patronage in the months before his fall, and Chapman had dedicated the first instalment of his *Homer* to the earl in 1598. After the execution of Essex, many poets lost their source of support. Jonson and Chapman may have hoped that Salusbury might help ‘to fill that vacuum’.⁵²

Burrow argues that by this stage of his career Shakespeare may not have had to seek patronage as desperately and actively as Jonson and Chapman. Yet Shakespeare must have understood how Jonson and Chapman may have felt about their loss of patronage because on the same day as the execution of Essex (25 February 1601) Shakespeare’s own patron, the earl of Southampton, was committed to the Tower of London. Interestingly, Alfred von Mauntz argues that the poem symbolises Shakespeare’s break with Southampton.⁵³ Kenneth Muir and Sean O’Loughlin, who

⁵¹ *Shakespeare: The ‘Lost Years’*, p. 99.

⁵² Burrow, introduction, p. 89.

⁵³ Referred to by John Roe, in his introduction to *The Poems*, p. 43.

recognise the young man in Shakespeare's sonnets as Southampton,⁵⁴ interpret the poem as a poetical expression of Shakespeare's stress on metaphysical love between him and his patron:

It must be emphasised that this break is not to be confused with the estrangement mentioned in the *Sonnets* themselves, but was a deeper and more disturbing one, which came after the last sonnet had been written. [. . .] Shakespeare now proclaims that though their mutual love is ended in the actual world, it exists for ever in eternity.⁵⁵

Muir and O'Loughlin, however, neglect the role of the dedicatee of the fourteen poems appended to *Loves Martyr*. Salusbury was knighted in 1601. The collection of fifteen poems was published to celebrate his knighthood. Shakespeare may have been solicited by Jonson, who appears to have had some kind of connection with the Salusbury family; an autograph copy of his ode on James Fitzgerald, earl of Desmond, has been found in a manuscript miscellany which was in the possession of the family.⁵⁶ Desmond was imprisoned in Dublin Castle and the Tower of London from 1579 to 1600. He was released on 1 October 1600, and Ian Donaldson suggests that Jonson wrote the ode shortly before this date.⁵⁷ According to the title-page in Jonson's 1616 folio, *Every Man out of his Humour* was 'Acted in the year 1599 / By the then Lord CHAMBERLAIN / his Servants'. The theatre was the newly constructed Globe. The exact date of the first performance is unknown, but it cannot have been before August or September when the Globe opened. Helen Ostovich proposes a date between 15 November and 20 December. Jonson's folio printed a list of 'principal Comedians' who had appeared in the first performance of *Every Man* in

⁵⁴ Duncan-Jones presents a strong case for William Herbert, third earl of Pembroke (see her introduction to *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, Arden Shakespeare Series (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1997), pp. 54–69.

⁵⁵ *The Voyage to Illyria: A New Study of Shakespeare* (New York: Barnes & Noble; London: Methuen, 1937; repr. 1970), pp. 131–2. Roe notes that G. Wilson Knight, 'in an argument apparently favouring Platonic bisexuality, asserts that "the Turtle signifies the female aspect of the male poet's soul"' (p. 43). But Knight is discussing Chapman's poem, not Shakespeare's (*The Mutual Flame: On Shakespeare's 'Sonnets' and 'The Phoenix and the Turtle'* (London: Methuen, 1955), p. 185).

⁵⁶ Burrow, introduction, p. 88.

⁵⁷ Annotation to 'An Ode to James, Earl of Desmond', in *Poems* by Ben Jonson (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 170–2 (p. 170).

which Shakespeare's name led the rest. His name also appeared among the actors who performed in Jonson's *Sejanus* (1603). By the time Chester published *Loves Martyr*, Jonson and Shakespeare had known each other (though to what degree we do not know).

It is, of course, a matter of conjecture whether Chester may have met Shakespeare through Jonson, or he may have directly approached all the contributors by himself. But Colin Burrow speculates that since 'Jonson was to collaborate with Chapman and Marston in 1605 over *Eastward Ho!* it is possible that he orchestrated the efforts of the other poets who contributed to the volume'. Whatever the circumstance may have been, Chester was probably aware of Shakespeare's reputation in London and able to obtain Shakespeare's piece to append to his own narrative poem. *Loves Martyr* and the fourteen 'Poetical Essaies' were printed by Richard Field, the printer of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*. Chester and Jonson may have been looking for a printer who might be interested in their poems celebrating Salusbury's knighthood. Chester had been living in Denbighshire, and Jonson was not yet a popular playwright at this stage of his career. It may have been for this reason that Jonson may have approached Shakespeare, and Shakespeare may have decided to help him. Chester and Jonson must have in all probability known that Field had previously published Shakespeare's narrative poems. Field then received a manuscript copy of the volume — Chester's narrative poem along with fourteen others including Shakespeare's new piece 'Let the bird of loudest lay'.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Burrow comments that '[t]he sad, solemn ritual of Shakespeare's poem seems to be motivated by something higher than the wish to praise a potential patron about whom in all probability he knew little' (p. 89).

Modern editors commonly assume that it is likely that Shakespeare took his theme from Chester's *Loves Martyr*.⁵⁹ The poem is not thought of as having any other direct literary source, although some influences from other poems have been pointed out, notably those of Sidney. But I would like to bring forward a poem that may well have been Shakespeare's source.

In 1600 an anthology of lyrical poetry entitled *England's Helicon* was published in quarto (see illus. 8). It was entered on the Stationers' Register on 4 August 1600. *England's Helicon* included not only some verses from Shakespeare's pastoral comedies but also Thomas Lodge's 'Montanus's sonnet to Phaebe', which bears a striking resemblance to Shakespeare's 'Let the bird of loudest lay':

A Turtle sate upon a leavellesse tree,
Mourning her absent pheare,⁶⁰
With sad and sorrie cheare.
About her wondering stood,
The Cittizens of wood.
And whilst her plumes she rents,
And for her Love she laments:
The stately trees complaine them,
The birds with sorrow paine them.
Each one that dooth her view,
Her paines and sorrowes rue.
But were the sorrowes knowne,
That me hath over-throwne:
Oh how would Phoebe sigh, if she did looke on mee?

Not only is the motif of the phoenix and the turtle in this sonnet identical to that of Shakespeare's poem, but the opening triplet of Lodge's sonnet resembles the opening stanza of Shakespeare's poem: 'Let the bird of loudest lay / On the sole Arabian tree / Herald sad and trumpet be, / To whose sound chaste wings obey (ll. 1–4).

There are, of course, crucial differences between the two poems. In Lodge's poem it is a turtle that sits on a leafless tree, while in Shakespeare's the bird that sits on an Arabian tree is not named, although the phoenix is a mythical Arabian bird and

⁵⁹ Roe, pp. 46–7; F. T. Prince, introduction to *The Poems* by Shakespeare, Arden Shakespeare Series (London: Methuen, 1960; repr. Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1998), p. xliii.

⁶⁰ 'Pheare': companion.

was believed to have a beautiful voice, as described in Shakespeare's own *Tempest* (III.3.18/19–24). Lodge used the sonnet form with an unconventional rhyme scheme 'abbccddeeffgga'. Shakespeare's poem consists of thirteen quatrains with the rhyme scheme 'abba, cddc, . . .' and five triplets with the rhyme scheme 'aaa, bbb, . . .'

Lodge wrote in iambic pentameter (conventional meter of the sonnet) while Shakespeare experimented with trochaics, which are rarer than iambics in Elizabethan poetry, with a broken trochaic at the end of each line: s u s u s (s = stressed, u = unstressed).

These differences between the two poems can be seen as Shakespeare's own poetical reworking of Lodge's poem, and the resemblance between them inevitably prompts us to wonder if Lodge's sonnet was in any sense a source for Shakespeare's poem. Lodge's sonnet first appeared in *Rosalynde: Euphues Golden Legacie* (1590), a pastoral romance known to be a source for Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (see illus. 9). If Lodge's sonnet in *Rosalynde* was a source for Shakespeare's 'Let the bird of loudest lay', it would explain Roe's comment that Sidney's pastoral poetry resembles Shakespeare's poem, for Lodge 'transform[ed] a heroic tale into a pastoral romance through the employment of conventions, allusions, style, character types and traditional settings drawn from such prototypes as Greene's *Menaphon*, Sidney's *Old Arcadia*, Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender* [sic], Montemayor's *Diana*, and Longus'[s] *Daphnis and Chloe*'. Montanus's sonnet — 'A Turtle sate upon a leavellesse tree' — appears in this pastoral setting; it is not surprising that Shakespeare's poem shows some pastoral residue of Lodge's *Rosalynde*.⁶¹

Shakespeare may have been interested in the sonnet in *Rosalynde* as a source for his own poem because Lodge's pastoral romance contained a variety of verses. It

⁶¹ Donald Beecher, introduction to *Rosalynde: Euphues' Golden Legacy Found after his Death in his Cell at Silixedra* (Ottawa: Dovehouse, 1997), pp. 58–63 (p. 23).

showed Lodge's poetical experiments. Of the twenty-one poems in *Rosalynde*, Lodge wrote four in pentameter stanzas rhyming 'ababcc' — a form practised in common with Greene. Among the remaining seventeen verses, however, 'there are no two alike, and none have [*sic*] readily identifiable formal sources':

It is as though he were creating a collection containing each of the major pastoral forms from eclogue, blazon, palinode, and complaint to the imposibilia, sonnet, canzone, echo, and folk refrain songs, in both established and innovative verse patterns, with virtually no duplication. There are couplets, and there are quatrains, rhymed both in the manner of Surrey (ABAB), and in the manner of Petrarch (ABBA). One sonnetto is written in tetrameter quatrains rhyming AAABCCCB. One poem loosely resembles a villanelle, another is ottava rima, while those remaining are idiosyncratic and original.⁶²

As I have argued elsewhere, Shakespeare insisted in *Romeo and Juliet* that poets should experiment with various verse forms, and Shakespeare himself demonstrated examples in the play.⁶³ In his poem 'Let the bird of loudest lay' Shakespeare once again conducted a poetical experiment.

In 1593 *The Phoenix Nest*, a memorial anthology for the death of Sir Philip Sidney compiled by 'R. S.', was published (illus. 10). The title of this anthology reminds us of Shakespeare's 'Let the bird of loudest lay', or even more particularly of the first line of the second stanza in the second section — 'Threnos' — of the poem: 'Death is now in the phoenix' nest'. Barbara Everett refers to *The Phoenix Nest* when she examines Sidney's impact on Shakespeare. But what she neglects is the fact that Lodge was a key contributor to this anthology. Shakespeare appears to have used Lodge's sonnet as a source even for *As You Like It*. Montanus, the speaker of Lodge's sonnet, refers to '[t]he Cittizens of wood' where the turtle lives. In *As You Like It*, the Duke calls deer 'native burghers of this desert city' (II.1.23), and Jacques 'fat and greasy citizens' (II.1.55). Shakespeare may have had in mind Lodge's 'Cittizens of

⁶² Ibid., p. 61.

⁶³ "'What's in a name?': Shakespeare, Derrida and *Romeo and Juliet*' (unpublished master's thesis, Drew University, USA, 1997).

wood' when he wrote this scene.⁶⁴ In 'Let the bird of loudest lay', Shakespeare's connection with Lodge seems stronger than his 'Lancashire' connection proposed by Honigmann.

Rosalynde was first published in 1590.⁶⁵ If Lodge's sonnet was a source for Shakespeare's 'Let the bird of loudest lay' — as Lodge's play was for Shakespeare's *As You Like It* — the earliest possible date for Shakespeare's poem can be 1590. The other editions that might have contributed to the poem were in 1592, 1596 and 1598. Given that it was in the late 1590s and the very early 1600s that Shakespeare wrote comedies (including *As You Like It*) that explore the nature of love, I feel inclined to place the poem with his comedies during this period — that is, sometime between the late 1590s and 1601. This hypothesis would also comfortably fit the argument of Roe and Burrow that Shakespeare's poem represents a movement or medium between Sidneian poetry and Metaphysical poetry.

S. Schoenbaum

In April 1985 Schoenbaum wrote a review of Honigmann's book for the *TLS*. On the one hand, he accepted the significance of Honigmann's publication: it 'makes it no longer possible for the responsible biographer to avoid a detour, with Honigmann for his *Guide Michelin*, into Lancashire, a long way from Stratford'. He also admitted that he had 'certainly f[ound] the possibility more intriguing than formerly',⁶⁶ and offered

⁶⁴ See Beecher, p. 246, n. 140.

⁶⁵ Lodge tells us that he wrote *Rosalynde* during a sea voyage under Captain Clarke that could go back to 1585. Between 1585 and 1590 Clarke made three voyages: 1585, 1586–7 and 1590. Although Alan Brissenden, editor for the Oxford edition of *As You Like It* asserts that it was during the voyage of 1586–7 that Lodge wrote *Rosalynde*, Beecher suggests that Lodge may have begun writing during the voyage of 1585 and then revised it in 1586–7. (Brissenden, introduction to *As You Like It*, Oxford Shakespeare Series (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 5; Beecher, introduction, pp. 16–9).

⁶⁶ Schoenbaum, 'A Detour into Lancashire', *TLS*, 19 April 1985, pp. 423–4 (p. 423).

a rather optimistic view: 'Who knows', he wrote, 'over four centuries, what unsuspected treasures remain to be discovered?'⁶⁷

On the other hand, Schoenbaum criticised Honigmann's absolute trust in Aubrey's reports. The American biographer insisted upon Aubrey's inaccuracy:

A skeptical practitioner of the older historicism may have some misgivings, as I have and others have had before. The redoubtable Antony Wood of Merton College, who knew Aubrey well — the latter furnished him with materials for his magisterial *Athenae Oxonienses* — said of him, ungratefully, that, 'being exceedingly credulous', Aubrey 'would stuff his many letters to A. W. with fooleries and misinformations which sometimes would guide him into the paths of error'. Setting down his notes more than half a century after Shakespeare's death, Aubrey's entry fittingly finds a place in Chambers, along with other manifestations of 'The Shakespeare-Mythos'. Aubrey may have been, in general, a scrupulous recorder of what was told him, but his 'Brief Life' of Shakespeare still should be taken *cum grano* [with a pinch of salt].⁶⁸

Schoenbaum sarcastically contended that 'this source, so important to Honigmann, nicely illustrates the rewards — and pitfalls — of Shakespearean biography'.⁶⁹

Halliwell-Phillipps had a similar view of Aubrey. His biographies are 'here and there disfigured by such palpable or ascertained blunders' that he appears to 'have been in the habit of compiling from imperfect notes of conversations, or, no doubt in many instances, from his own recollections of them'. He thus warned that it was 'hazardous as a rule to depend upon his [Aubrey's] statements in the absence of corroborative evidence' unless there is 'too much elaboration for his memory to have been entirely at fault'.⁷⁰

Schoenbaum was equally sceptical about Honigmann's suggestion that Shakespeare wrote 'Let the bird of loudest lay' in 1586: 'I welcome, where it is done upon good evidence, opening the barriers imposed by an ossified traditional chronology, but my eyebrows remain stubbornly raised over this one. *The Phoenix*

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 424. Or was he sarcastic?

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 424.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 424.

⁷⁰ *Outlines*, I, p. x. See also Joseph William Gray, *Shakespeare's Marriage, His Departure from Stratford and Other Incidents in His Life* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1905), pp. 253–4.

and the Turtle in 1586?’⁷¹ Honigmann asserted that it should not be surprising if Shakespeare could have written ‘in such masterly fashion as early as December 1586’. Honigmann referred to Heminges and Condell’s epistle in the folio that Shakespeare’s ‘mind and hand went together: And what he thought, he vttered with that easinesse, that wee haue scarce receiued from him a blot in his papers’.⁷² Shakespeare did write an extraordinary number of plays in his lifetime. But Heminges and Condell’s epistle should be regarded as a hyperbole, though it may well convey the sense of Shakespeare’s unusual talent, and taking their words literally seems Bardolatry. Honigmann told us that ‘the Salusbury circle favoured a “learned” style’. In order to show that Shakespeare was a learned man, Honigmann referred to Aubrey’s biographical note that Shakespeare had been ‘a schoolmaster in the country’, and regarded the 1592 attack on Shakespeare as a sign of the young player’s popularity and genius.⁷³ But the reliability of Aubrey’s account has been questioned, and the *Groats-worth of witte* attack is not as convincing as Honigmann suggests, for it took place in 1592, not in 1586.

Schoenbaum also wondered, if Shakespeare was a Catholic, how John Hall, Shakespeare’s son-in-law, would have felt about Shakespeare’s ‘way of life’. John Hall, the physician who married the dramatist’s elder daughter on 5 June 1606, was an enthusiastic Protestant. Schoenbaum pointed out that Honigmann, while mentioning that Hall was a Protestant, was ‘silent about the doctor’s Puritanism’. Schoenbaum noted that ‘the record fails to testify’ how Hall felt about Shakespeare’s religious view, but emphasised Hall’s strong Protestant leanings. He ‘zealously censured parishioners who came late to church, slept through services, swore, wore hats, or put their hands in ladies’ plackets’. He served as churchwarden and sidesman in 1628–9,

⁷¹ Schoenbaum, ‘A Detour into Lancashire’, p. 424.

⁷² Folio, A3.

⁷³ *Shakespeare: The ‘Lost Years’*, pp. 109–10.

allying himself with the vicar Thomas Wilson, 'who had antagonized the [town] corporation with his Puritanical views'.⁷⁴

At the end of his review Schoenbaum briefly noted that he was 'convinced that I had best revise my pages on Shakeshafte and the Hoghtons for the next impression of my *Compact Documentary Life*'.⁷⁵ The revised edition came out two years later (1987) with an addition of a postscript at the end of the book. In this postscript Schoenbaum reported that 'David George, who ha[d] been collecting and editing the Lancashire materials for the Records of Early English Drama series, noted that Hoghton's musical instruments in fact no doubt went to Sir Thomas Hesketh [. . .], as may be seen from the inventory of the property of his son Robert drawn up in 1620'.⁷⁶ The inventory indeed lists musical instruments (appendix D). However, I must point out that we cannot know whether or not Richard received these instruments from Alexander Hoghton; the inventory simply records Richard's property and their values.⁷⁷

II. The late 1990s – the 2000s: Revival, Institutionalisation, Tourism and 'Tabloid Shakespeare'

Although Schoenbaum published a new edition of his *Shakespeare's Lives* in 1991, he neither added any further information nor provided new insights. The Lancastrian theories appeared either to enjoy another peaceful period after Honigmann's

⁷⁴ Schoenbaum, 'A Detour into Lancashire', p. 424. The same account is given in his 1975 *Documentary Life*, p. 236. See also *Man and Artist*, II, pp. 885–6; Thomas Carter, *Shakespeare, Puritan, and Recusant* (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant Anderson & Ferrier, 1897), p. 191 and Milward, *Shakespeare's Religious Background*, p. 162. Hall looked after Catholic as well as Protestant patients. On his Catholic patients, see Joan Lane with Melvin Earles, *John Hall and His Patients: The Medical Practice of Shakespeare's Son-in-Law* (Stratford: Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, 1996), pp. xvii–xviii; Lane, 'John Hall and his Catholic Patients', paper presented at the conference 'Shakespeare and the Warwickshire Catholic World (19 September 1998).

⁷⁵ Schoenbaum, 'A Detour into Lancashire', p. 424.

⁷⁶ *Compact Documentary Life*, revised edn, p. 324.

⁷⁷ For the inventory, see appendix D.

publication, or to fade away. No publication on the theories came out. A main reason, it can be argued, was the death of Schoenbaum in 1996, who, as we have seen, was a major opponent to these theories. Not only did the Lancastrian theories escape from severe opposition in the 1990s, but they were also backed up by a new speculation by Richard Wilson, who in 1997 revived the theories in his *TLS* article 'Shakespeare and the Jesuits'.⁷⁸

Richard Wilson

Richard Wilson claimed that none of the proponents of the Lancastrian theory had been able to explain 'what tied Houghton Tower to Stratford' and 'why, if Shakespeare was Shakeshafte, it should have become such a secret'. Here it must be noted that Wilson attempted to establish a connection between Stratford and Houghton Tower, not Lea Hall (Alexander's residence) as the previous Lancastrians had done. As we have seen already, Milward had speculated that Shakespeare, while living with Alexander at Lea, might have visited Campion at Houghton Tower. Wilson's theory, on the other hand, suggested that Shakespeare, with Campion, might have moved from Stratford directly to Houghton Tower. Wilson's theory, then, had a serious problem: although Alexander Houghton of Lea became head of the family after Thomas Houghton of Houghton Tower died in exile at Liège in 1580, Lea Hall remained Alexander's residence. It is odd that Alexander, who lived at Lea, not at Houghton Tower, commended Shakeshafte in his will, if Shakeshafte (or Shakespeare), as Wilson argued, was attached to Houghton Tower.

Wilson may have misunderstood that Alexander lived at Houghton Tower after 1580. There was, however, another reason for Wilson to link Shakespeare with the Tower. He contended that 'no one explored the Catholic context [. . .] a Jesuit mission

⁷⁸ Richard Wilson, 'Shakespeare and the Jesuits', *TLS*, 19 December 1997, pp. 11–3 (p. 11).

in the winter of 1580–1 which connects the two places'. Wilson claimed that 'even Honigmann [was] at a loss "Why Shakespeare should have been sent so far from home"'. Claiming that Campion had taken 'the very same road that autumn accompanied by a picked escort of young "subseminarians" [. . .] and stayed with the Hoghtons and their neighbours until May 15, 1581 [. . .]', Wilson suggested that Shakespeare might have moved to Hoghton Tower as one of 'the young men recruited by Campion'.⁷⁹ Wilson thus carried the Lancastrian theories one step further: his theory located Shakespeare at the centre of the Counter-Reformation, not merely in England, but in Europe, by arguing that Shakespeare was not merely a Catholic but a more activist confederate of the Jesuit missionary.

Wilson, like Milward, declared that Campion stayed at Hoghton Tower. During this period, Campion was writing his *Rationes Decem*. Wilson firmly believed that Campion used the library at Hoghton Tower for this purpose. In an interview, Wilson said, 'On 4 August — the day after Alexander Hoghton commended Shakeshafte to the care of Thomas Hesketh in his will — the Privy Council commanded a search for "certain books and papers that Edmund Campion has confessed he left at the house of one Richard Hoghton'. In the same interview, Sir Bernard de Hoghton said, 'Some of the really hot ones [Campion's books and papers] were never found when the authorities ransacked Hoghton Tower. [. . .] I think they may be hidden here. One day I hope to find them'. De Hoghton wished to believe that 'some sort of academy of excellence [. . .] from the Midlands', rather than an activist seminarian, was staying at Hoghton Tower.⁸⁰ There is, however, no documentary evidence that the authorities 'ransacked Hoghton Tower' in the search for Campion's

⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 11 and 13.

⁸⁰ Quoted in Jay Iliff, 'Shakespeare's Secret Life', *Sunday Express Magazine* (20 August 2000), pp. 20–1 (p. 21). According to Iliff, there has long been oral tradition in the de Hoghton family that Shakespeare lived at Hoghton Tower during the 'lost years' (p. 20).

papers. As I have pointed out in chapter 3, the Privy Council ordered the local authorities to search the house of Richard Hoghton — that is, Park Hall, not Hoghton Tower.

As regards the name ‘Shakeshafte’, Wilson claimed that Shakeshafte had been a variant used by Richard Shakespeare — obviously, Wilson overlooked the information about Stopes’s misreading, which Schoenbaum had previously provided — and suggested that it had been Shakespeare’s *religious* alias:

With both his father and teacher so close to this secret society, it would be odd if the star of Stratford Grammar School were *not* pressed to join the ‘boys who for this cause have separated from their parents’, and who “*give up their names*”, Campion exulted, “as veterans offer their blood”. Historians interpret this phrase to mean that the Sodality adopted aliases, so that P[e]rson became Doleman; Campion, Hastings; and Debdale, Palmer [. . .] So, if Shakespeare was Shakeshafte, it would have been, as Campion stated at his trial, to be a convert like St Paul [. . .]⁸¹

It was, Wilson argued, an adoption of an alias ‘necessitated [. . .] by everyone involved’ in the Jesuit circle.⁸²

Wilson’s theory thus suggested that Shakespeare, recruited by Campion as a sub-seminarian when he went from Warwickshire to Lancashire, might have acted as an associate of the Jesuits. Although Wilson considers it a ‘sensational idea’,⁸³ there is no documentary evidence to prove that Shakespeare joined Campion as a sub-seminarian. Nevertheless, Wilson suggested that after the arrest and the execution of Campion Shakespeare ‘slipp[ed] from the pulpit to the playhouse’. In Wilson’s view, ‘Shakeshafte’ vanished from the records forever because Shakespeare, having given up his old faith, no longer needed any religious alias and ‘transformed from a papist into a poet’.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Wilson, ‘Shakespeare and the Jesuits’, p. 12.

⁸² Ibid., p. 13.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 13.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 13.

Peter Milward, S. J.

Because he published his work as an article in the *TLS*, Wilson did not attach references or a bibliography. In addition, Wilson insisted that he had discovered ‘new connections’ to support the theory, as the subtitle of his article indicated.

Consequently, it could have given some readers of the *TLS* the wrong impression that most — if not all — of the Lancashire connections which he provided in the article were his own discoveries. Having read Wilson’s article, Milward, who had already cast light upon some of these ‘new connections’ twenty-four years previously, sent the *TLS* editor a letter of protest:

A Christmas essay for the *TLS* is hardly expected to display the comprehensive documentation required for a doctoral thesis. But when Richard Wilson, in his otherwise fascinating essay on ‘Shakespeare and the Jesuits’ [. . .] repeats such negative assertions as that none of ‘the proponents . . . have been able to explain . . .’, that ‘no one explored . . .’, and that it ‘has not been explained . . .’, one expects him to have himself explored all the material available to him on this subject — namely, the so-called ‘Shakeshafte theory’ and the hidden connection between Stratford and the area around Preston.⁸⁵

Although Wilson mentioned the names of a few proponents of the theories, such as Chambers, Baker and Honigmann, he omitted Keen, whose ten-year research was crucial to the development of the theories. Furthermore, Milward pointed out that Wilson ‘seem[ed] certain of the novelty of “the discovery that John Cottom, Stratford schoolmaster from 1579 to 1581, belonged to Lancashire gentry”, though it was presented as early as 1961 by H. A. Shield’.⁸⁶

Milward forgave Wilson’s overlooking of Shield’s conclusions as they were published in an ‘old article in a somewhat out-of-the-way Jesuit journal, not exclusively devoted to Shakespeare or his time’. However, Milward protested against ‘the way Wilson present[ed] as “new” what I ha[d] long since known and published to

⁸⁵ Peter Milward, ‘Shakespeare and the Jesuits’, letter to the editor, *TLS*, 2 January 1999, p. 15.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15. As we have seen, however, Robert Stevenson pointed out the link between the Cottoms and the Hoghtons in 1958, three years before the publication of Shield’s article.

the world'. He expressed his strong objection to Wilson's neglect of his 'more comprehensive book', *Shakespeare's Religious Background*, in which, 'besides dealing with the Shakeshafte theory and the Lancashire connection of Shakespeare's schoolmasters, including Cottom', he 'devote[s] a whole chapter to "English Jesuits", beginning with Campion and his journey through the Midlands (where he might have met John Shakespeare) to Lancashire'.⁸⁷

Milward contended that the only suggestion in Wilson's article which was new to him was that the young Shakespeare went to Houghton Tower with Campion as a sub-seminarian. Milward protested, as I have indicated already, that the association of Shakeshafte was, as had been pointed out since 1923, with Alexander Houghton of Lea. He also pointed out that it was Lea, not Houghton Tower, that was close to the home of the Cottoms.

Milward's one other objection to Wilson was the latter scholar's suggestion that Shakespeare's plays showed his *complete* transformation from a papist into a poet — 'as if the dramatist could only have been one or the other but not both'. 'If Shakespeare had learnt anything from the exigencies of the time and his own father's caution', Milward argued, 'he would have done his best to cover up all signs of his being a papist' in his writing.⁸⁸ For Milward Shakespeare was 'a fully committed Catholic, not just in his early Catholic formation [. . .] but all through his life and in all his plays'.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ 'Shakespeare and the Jesuits', letter to the editor, p. 15. Milward also complained that Wilson had overlooked his more recent book *The Catholicism of Shakespeare's Plays*, which included a lengthy appendix on the Jesuits (p. 15). In this book, however, Milward suggests the connection between Shakespeare and Robert Parsons.

⁸⁸ 'Shakespeare and the Jesuits', letter to the editor, p. 15. Milward repeats this idea in his 'Shakespeare and the Reformation', *The Renaissance Bulletin* 27 (2000), 7–14 (pp. 11 and 14).

⁸⁹ 'A Survey of Shakespeare and Religion', review of *Shakespeare Survey* 54 (2001), 43–8 (p. 48).

Park Honan

1998 proved another exciting year for biographical studies of Shakespeare: Park Honan published *Shakespeare: A Life*. Honan not only accepted that there was a ‘possibility that Shakespeare spent some months in the north of England’, but also insisted that:⁹⁰

it is rather unlikely that he [Shakespeare] entered the theatre without influential help; we have no record of a Tudor playing company recruiting on the road [. . .] Some of his early work was to be linked with the men of Ferdinando, and we cannot deny that men under that patron formed the nucleus of the Lord Chamberlain’s company. If Shakespeare never knew Houghton or Derby, it is odd that he was known by their friends.⁹¹

It is true that support from a patron was an essential factor to run a playing company in early modern England. It is not clear, however, whether or not such ‘influential help’ as Honan argues here was necessary in order to ‘enter the theatre’.

Honan also noted that if Alexander Houghton did ask Cottom to recommend to him ‘a clever, sympathetic young person to teach in the north, Cottom had Jenkins’ former pupils to turn to’ among whom was the future dramatist — Shakespeare.⁹² His version of the story of 1579 was as follows:

As spring turned into summer in the parish there was a normal changeover at the King’s New School when Master Jenkins was replaced by John Cottom. The two teachers agreed to — and signed — an arrangement as regards part-payment of salary, and Jenkins before leaving had one task laid upon him by the full weight of canon law: he had to recommend boys among those whom he had taught. He was supposed to send names of his abler pupils to the bishop of Worcester [. . .] Yet we do not know that a borough teacher ever sent his [Shakespeare’s] name to the Anglican bishop [. . .]⁹³

Honan admitted that the evidence was ‘still uncertain’, but nevertheless concluded that ‘with their known connection’, Jenkins or Cottom might well have proposed to the

⁹⁰ Park Honan, *Shakespeare: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 62 (emphasis added).

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

young Shakespeare ‘an alternative way ahead, and a journey’ that could have led him ‘to wear at a surprisingly early age “playe clothes”’.⁹⁴

Honan argued that Shakespeare’s topographical descriptions revealed his knowledge of actual landscapes on the west coast of England; that is, Shakespeare’s plays present pictures of landscapes that he actually knew. He commented that ‘[i]n his early plays there are fine, closely observed images of mountains, the sea, and it seems, of an estuary landscape such as appears in a soliloquy of Richard of Gloucester in *3 Henry VI*:⁹⁵ ‘Why, then, I do but dream on sovereignty / Like one that stands upon a promontory / And spies a far-off shore where he would tread, / Wishing his foot were equal with his eye, / And chides the sea that sunders him from thence, / Saying he’ll lade it dry to have his way —’ (III.2.134–9). ‘These topographical images’, Honan commented, ‘correspond with nothing in Warwickshire’s landscape’ and that ‘[t]his may suggest that William has followed the fleece, that he knows vistas around Lea, and one of his teachers has sent him north, with John Shakespeare’s compliance’.⁹⁶ Needless to say, this is an unconvincing argument because Shakespeare did not have to travel to *Lancashire* to produce this topographical image. Shakespeare may have seen a similar landscape somewhere else, or he may have simply used his vivid imagination on the basis of a description which he may have heard from one of his fellow actors who knew landscapes other than those of Warwickshire and London.

Richard Wilson

In July 1999 Richard Wilson, along with his colleague Richard Dutton, organized an international Shakespeare conference at Lancaster University in association with

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 58–9.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 62.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 63.

Hoghton Tower.⁹⁷ Anthony Holden, as I have briefly indicated in my introduction, revealed in *The Observer* the project to turn Hoghton Tower into ‘a Shakespearean “Glyndebourne of the North” — a study centre and library plus a £20 million, 800-seat theatre’. Ex-RSC director David Thacker had already been appointed artistic director, and Wilson was to be the director of the research centre. Each summer there would be an extravagant Shakespeare festival, and the theatre was to serve as a touring base for theatre companies including the RSC and the National for the rest of the year. To accomplish these plans, a lottery grant had been applied for, and a Labour politician had been invited to become chairman of the trustees.⁹⁸

These plans were also revealed in the session ‘The Vision of Hoghton Tower’ on the last day of the Lancastrian conference with slides showing architects’ impressions of the new Shakespeare centre. Some of these slides showed photographs of Richard Wilson standing at the location which, if the dream comes true, is to be the foundation of the new centre. With this visionary project and the conference (which itself was part of the project) Wilson had attempted not only to propagandise but also to *institutionalise* his Lancastrian theory.

Michael Davies openly criticised Wilson’s motivation as the ‘most disturbing’ aspect of the ‘advocacy’ of a Catholic Shakespeare and claimed that Wilson’s article in the *TLS* ‘comes dangerously close to being little more than a tourist brochure for Lancashire’.⁹⁹ Although Davies declared that ‘it is this project [. . .] which lies behind the article’s championing of new evidence for the Catholic Bard’, it is not clear

⁹⁷ ‘Lancastrian Shakespeare: A Conference on Region, Religion, Patronage and Performance’ (21–23 July 1999). Keynotes speakers included Eamon Duffy, Stephen Greenblatt, Anthony Holden, Peter Milward, and Richard Wilson.

⁹⁸ Anthony Holden, ‘William the Younger’, *The Guardian*, 18 July 1999, < <http://www.guardianunlimited.co.uk> > (no pagination). A year later, another journalist wrote a report of this project. In *Sunday Express Magazine* (20 August 2000) Jay Iliff reported that the project included a £25 million 600-seat theatre — a theatre that would cost an extra £5 million, but would have 200 fewer seats than Holden previously reported (p. 20).

⁹⁹ ‘On This Side Bardolatry: The Canonisation of the Catholic Shakespeare’, *Cahiers Élisabéthains* 58 (2000), 31–47 (p. 41).

whether the Houghton Tower project provoked Wilson's association of Shakespeare with Lancashire, or the latter motivated the former.¹⁰⁰ What is obvious, however, is that the grand project to build a new Shakespeare centre motivated Wilson to organise a conference, and that the conference was to propagate the Lancastrian theories.

Peter Milward, S. J.

Milward was one of the keynote speakers at the conference Wilson and Dutton organised. After the conference, he published a pamphlet called *Shakespeare in Lancashire*, which showed the impact of Wilson's theory on his senior Lancastrian. Milward altered his theory, bringing forward the link between Shakespeare and Campion. According to Milward's theory, when Shakespeare at Sir William Catesby's may have informed Campion of his intention to stay with the Houghtons of Lea Hall in the near future, he may at that time have learned of the Jesuit's plan to visit the Houghtons. Milward suggested that it was 'likely' that Shakespeare would have not only told Campion of his interest in drama 'with the probability of furthering this interest in Alexander Houghton's household, as being one of the tasks committed to a tutor' but also learned of Campion's own experience in composing Latin plays at Prague. Milward believed that it 'must have seemed providential to both men that they would be staying in the same district of Lancashire, under the auspices of the same Houghton family, about the same time'. They travelled northwards: Campion through Northamptonshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire, while Shakespeare went directly to Lancashire. Milward had previously rejected Wilson's theory that Shakespeare moved to Houghton Tower because Alexander resided at Lea Hall, not the Tower. According to Milward's altered theory, however, Shakespeare arrived either at Lea Hall or at Houghton Tower possibly in the early autumn of 1580. He departed from Wilson's

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 41.

theory by speculating further that in Lancashire Shakespeare might have practised the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius under Campion's personal direction. Milward strongly believed that Shakespeare received a Jesuit training in Lancashire, as did the biographer himself.¹⁰¹

Hoghton Tower Preservation Trust and Graeme Bryson

Hoghton Tower Preservation Trust considered Wilson's revival of the Lancastrian theories an opportunity to establish the mansion as a tourist centre in Lancashire. Its brochure describes Alexander Houghton as the 'patron of William Shakespeare'.¹⁰² In the room now called the 'king's ante chamber' where a portrait of Alexander Houghton is hung, the tour guides introduce tourists to the de Houghton family tradition that Shakespeare stayed at the Tower. Along with the brochure, the gift shop sells not only Honigmann's *Shakespeare: The 'Lost Years'* but also Graeme Bryson's pamphlet biography *Shakespeare in Lancashire*, in which the retired lawyer tells the tourists that 'there can be no doubt in my view that William Shakeshafte in this [Alexander Houghton's] will was meant to be William Shakespeare in the flesh'.¹⁰³ The second edition (1998) of Bryson's biography contains Bernard de Houghton's foreword in which he makes the same mistake as Richard Wilson: he notes that Shakespeare used Shakespeare's grandfather's surname as an alias during his stay at Houghton Tower. Although de Houghton politely calls Bryson's biography an 'excellent little book',¹⁰⁴ Bryson fails to acknowledge the theories presented in the past, lacks close analysis of evidence (both positive and negative) and neglects counter-arguments. Bryson claims

¹⁰¹ *Shakespeare in Lancashire*, Renaissance Pamphlets 22 (Tokyo: Renaissance Institute, 2000), 4–8. For Milward's detailed discussion of the spiritual exercises and Shakespeare's plays, see *The Plays and the Exercises: A Hidden Source of Shakespeare's Inspiration?*, Renaissance Monographs 29 (Tokyo: Renaissance Institute, 2002).

¹⁰² Houghton Tower Preservation Trust, *Hoghton Tower* ([n.p.]: Beric Tempest for Houghton Tower Preservation Trust, 1999), p. 22. The brochure also says that Alexander 'gave hospitality' to Campion in 1580–81 (p. 22).

¹⁰³ *Shakespeare in Lancashire* (Liverpool: Sunwards, 1997; 2nd edn, 1998), p. 11.

¹⁰⁴ Foreword dated 1 August 1998 (no pagination).

that he has read ‘most of the books about Shakespeare’, but a number of books that have made a great contribution to the Lancastrian enterprise (including Chambers, Keen and Milward among many others) are missing in his bibliography.¹⁰⁵

For the most part Bryson merely repeats some of the existing theories without acknowledgment. There is, therefore, no need to examine his pamphlet in detail. It is sufficient to point out a couple of flaws in his argument. He speculates that John Cottom may have taken Shakespeare to Lancashire, and claims later in the pamphlet that Shakespeare arrived in Lancashire in 1579.¹⁰⁶ This is the year in which John Cottom became the schoolmaster, and he taught at the Stratford grammar school until 1582. It leads us to the inevitable conclusion that Bryson’s theory is inconsistent. Bryson, like Wilson, claims that Shakespeare ‘travelled 150 miles from Stratford-on-Avon to Hoghton Tower’, and that Hoghton Tower played a ‘real part’ in Shakespeare’s early life. Although he comments that this ‘seems straightforward to me, and so natural’,¹⁰⁷ he must face the same criticism as Wilson: that Alexander resided at Lea Hall, not Hoghton Tower. For Wilson, Campion was the link between Stratford and Hoghton Tower. Bryson, on the other hand, shows no link. Bryson, just like Honigmann, presents a distorted image of the fourth and fifth earls of Derby that supports his own theory and utterly neglects negative evidence. Finally, Bryson’s imagination departs from the other Lancastrians by suggesting that both Ferdinando Stanley, who exposed Richard Hesketh, and Shakespeare were ‘government agents’ or spies, but we are not given any evidence.¹⁰⁸

Sir Bernard de Hoghton is unaware of these problems in Bryson’s pamphlet. De Hoghton sees it ‘perfectly adapted to the reading tastes of the modern layman’ and

¹⁰⁵ It should be noted that Bryson quotes Chambers’s theory (p. 12) but lists none of his works in his bibliography.

¹⁰⁶ Pp. 4 and 27.

¹⁰⁷ Pp. 2 and 12.

¹⁰⁸ p. 30.

believes that it ‘fills an important non academic gap’.¹⁰⁹ The significance of Bryson’s pamphlet is that it made the Lancastrian theories part of Houghton Tower tourism rather than part of the continuing academic debate.

Anthony Holden

Holden’s *Observer* article ‘William the Younger’ had a sub-heading: ‘Forget all the myths about the “missing” years of his youth. Shakespeare was in hiding — because he was a Catholic’.¹¹⁰ This tabloidesque title may have interested many general readers. As a newspaper article for readers who might not be familiar with the Lancastrian theories, Holden gave a brief summary of them. But he did not provide any new insights, and his narrative lacked careful analysis. He called the Lancastrian theories the ‘new fact of Shakespeare’s life’, and celebrated the project to build the new Houghton Tower Shakespeare centre ‘on the very spot where the man himself learned his trade’.¹¹¹ He reported that Houghton Tower was ‘still owned and occupied by the family who took in the young playwright’, though there is no evidence to prove it. As we have seen, the Lancastrian theories were neither ‘new’ nor ‘fact’. The significance of Holden’s article, therefore, was twofold: he made the theories widely available to general readers, but he misguided uncritical readers.¹¹²

Holden added a false note: the ‘delegates [of the Lancastrian conference] believe[d] the young poet-in-the-making fetched up, fleeing persecution as an illegally

¹⁰⁹ Foreword (no pagination).

¹¹⁰ ‘William the Younger’ (no pagination).

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Holden also claims that ‘the legend of Will Shakespeare the deer-poacher’ is ‘the only tale for which there is any evidence’. This is misleading since he does not say whether the ‘evidence’ proves that the tale is a ‘legend’ or ‘fact’. I would like to clarify that it is a ‘legend’ first mentioned by Richard Davies between 1688 and 1708; there is no evidence that Sir Thomas Lucy owned a deer park in Warwickshire. See Charlotte Carmichael Stopes, *Shakespeare’s Warwickshire Contemporaries* (1907), pp. 39–41, Mark Eccles, *Shakespeare in Warwickshire* (1961), pp. 72–3, and Schoenbaum, *Documentary Life*, pp. 78–87, and *Shakespeare’s Lives*, pp. 108–14. For a facsimile of Davies’s manuscript, see Chambers, *Facts and Problems*, II, plate XXIX between pp. 256 and 7, and Schoenbaum, *Documentary Life*, p. 79 (n. 70).

recusant Catholic'.¹¹³ Holden's report was unforgivable in the eyes of some scholars, especially those Stratfordians who believe that Shakespeare stayed in Stratford during the lost years. In the next month, Duncan-Jones, who had attended the conference at Lancaster University (and regretted it), wrote a commentary for the *TLS* on the Lancastrian theories and the conference. Although she admitted that there had been since the publication of Wilson's article in the *TLS* 'a groundswell of excitement' about the theories, especially the suggestion that Shakespeare was 'an instructed and activist [. . .] associate of Jesuit martyrs', she insisted that she had 'always' been skeptical about the theories. Duncan-Jones suggested that 'Shakespeare's parents might well have had some residual attachment to the old religion, as many families did in Elizabethan Warwickshire, but that they lacked the education and sophistication to adopt any complex or risky alignment'.¹¹⁴ As to Shakeshafte, Duncan-Jones commented, as did Hamer and Schoenbaum, that he appeared to have been a musician rather than an actor and that it was a very common surname in Lancashire.

Holden had a particular motivation in writing an article on the Lancastrian conference and Shakespeare's 'lost years' for *The Observer*: he was going to publish a biography later in the year, and writing for one of the best-selling quality newspapers was a prominent means of promoting his forthcoming biography. His *William Shakespeare: His Work and Life* disclosed that Holden had swallowed the controversial identification of Shakeshafte with Shakespeare. It was a 'pop biography' by an amateur professional. On the one hand, Holden is a journalist by profession, and as such he knew how to collect information.¹¹⁵ On the other hand, he is an amateur in that he did not examine critically the information he obtained. Holden's biography may appear 'lively' in the phrase used by a reviewer, but there is no doubt that it is

¹¹³ 'William the Younger' (no pagination).

¹¹⁴ Duncan-Jones, 'Letter from Lancashire', Commentary, *TLS*, 13 August 1999, p. 5.

¹¹⁵ Holden, at the British Library, repeatedly emphasised that he was a journalist.

unscholarly and would not meet any academic biographer's standard. Holden collected bits of information from various biographies, and by putting them together made up a life of the dramatist, often without clarifying how and where he had obtained the information. Legends and myths, therefore, became evidence, and conjectures and speculations were given the status of facts. Holden gave birth to 'tabloid Shakespeare'.

Holden's chapter 'The Lost Years' for the most part simply repeats the theories which other Lancastrians had presented in the past and utterly neglects negative evidence and counter-arguments.¹¹⁶ What differentiated his theory from the others, however, was his speculation about the playing company with which Shakespeare moved to London. In the past it had been suggested that Shakespeare might have joined Derby's men or Strange's men in Lancashire and moved to London as a member of the company. Holden, on the other hand, repeated the old suggestion that it was with the Queen's men that the young Shakespeare moved to London. What should be noted here is that according to Holden's theory, Shakespeare's entrance to the London theatrical world had nothing to do with his Lancashire connection.

Since Holden believed that Shakespeare might have joined the Queen's men before he started his London career, the journalist did not bring in other Lancastrians' suggestion that Greene's alleged jealousy may have related to Shakespeare's privileged position with the Stanleys. Holden, instead, declared that Greene was jealous of Shakespeare because Greene (as well as Nashe) 'would [. . .] offer dedications to Southampton, but it was Shakespeare with whom the young earl had begun to develop a relationship, both professional and personal, of striking

¹¹⁶ Hal Jensen wrote a bitter (yet plausible) review of Holden's biography for the *TLS*. See "'Bard Goes North', *TLS*, 10 December 1999, p. 34.

intensity'.¹¹⁷ This speculation, however, was not originally Holden's; although he did not identify any sources on which he had relied for this particular argument, it had been suggested, for instance, by G. P. V. Akrigg in his *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton* (1968).

A problem of Holden's theory is that we have 'no evidence as to when, where, or under what circumstances' Shakespeare first met Southampton, and Akrigg, unlike Holden, was well aware of the problem.¹¹⁸ We have no documentary evidence regarding Shakespeare's relationship to Southampton except the former's dedications to the latter in *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594). *Venus and Adonis* was first published in quarto in 1593. It had been entered in the Stationers' Register by Richard Field on 18 April 1593. This evidence shows that Shakespeare knew (or knew of) Southampton sometime before April 1593, but does not necessarily suggest that by 1592 Shakespeare and Southampton 'had begun to develop a relationship, both professional and personal, of striking intensity'.¹¹⁹

As we have seen, Holden's report on the conference at Lancaster University in the summer of 1999 disclosed some of the agenda behind the conference and Richard Wilson's ambition to *institutionalise* an aspect of Shakespeare biography. It was Wilson's motivation to popularise his Lancastrian theory. In Holden's case, on the other hand, his personal motivations are the initiating impulse. Holden both at the conference at Lancaster University (1999) and in his biography, disclosed three motives which had made him eager to support the Lancastrian theories: (1) he was born in Lancashire; (2) his father was a shopkeeper in Hoghton Street, Southampton; (3) one of his first girlfriends was a Hesketh, a 'direct descendant of the local toffs'

¹¹⁷ *William Shakespeare: His Life and Work* (London: Little, Brown, 1999), p. 111.

¹¹⁸ G. P. V. Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1968), p. 193.

¹¹⁹ Holden, *William Shakespeare*, p. 111. See also my discussion of Holden's article on the newly discovered portrait of Southampton (appendix H).

whom Holden believes to have ‘t[aken] in the young actor-playwright in the 1580s’.¹²⁰ He personally *wants* Shakespeare to have been to his home county and *wants* Shakeshafte to be identified with the dramatist.

III. The Twenty-first Century: Split in the Shakespeare World

As we have seen, the Lancastrian theories divided Shakespeare scholars. The split between the Lancastrians and their opponents continues to widen in the twenty-first century.

Richard Wilson

Richard Wilson continued to play a vital role in promoting the Lancastrian theories by giving the prestigious Shakespeare lecture at the British Academy on 25 April 2001. Although Wilson, for the most part, concentrated on the analysis of Shakespeare’s personality reflected in his plays by placing them in Catholic contexts and introducing Lacanian psychoanalysis and other postmodernist theories, both literary and non-literary, into his examination of the plays, especially those containing images of the sea and seacoast, his Lancastrian theory, which he had introduced in his *TLS* article, rested at the centre of his entire argument: Shakespeare’s religious experience shared with Campion in his ‘lost years’ formed the foundation of his hidden personality, which is inevitably reflected in his plays. In Wilson’s view:

[the young Shakespeare,] who must have dismayed his controllers when he did *not* sail to France [that is, to attend the English college], exchanged a ‘blessed conscience’ in the unseen world across the waves for creative freedom in the world he knew: dreaming on that absent off-stage space of violent faith and

¹²⁰ Holden, *William Shakespeare*, p. 4.

martyrdom from within the circle of his wooden 'promontory' of theatre.¹²¹

This sense of a 'world elsewhere', Wilson argues, is symbolised in the sea imagery in Shakespeare's plays.

In his lecture Wilson described Hoghton Tower as 'Shakespeare's benefactor', despite Milward's earlier objection that Alexander's residence was not Hoghton Tower but Lea Hall. Wilson also informed — or rather *misinformed* — his audience that the Tower was 'marked with a cross as "Thomas Hoghton: the fugitive"' in Cecil's map of Lancashire.¹²² Wilson's audience, who were hardly likely to be familiar with Cecil's map, may not have understood what the 'cross' signified and may have failed to spot the inaccuracy in Wilson's remark. Let us thus examine Cecil's map of Lancashire.¹²³

The Public Record Office preserves a large coloured map of Lancashire showing along with the churches and chapels the principal residences of the gentry with their names. The map was drawn up for the Privy Council to assist in enforcement of the reformation and hunting down of recusants. The British Library preserves a copy of the map specially prepared for the private use of William Cecil, Lord Burghley. It is bound up with a collection of maps, mostly composed of the series of Christopher Saxton's counties of England and Wales.¹²⁴ On the backs of these maps Cecil engrossed the names of the justices of peace, with the dates and places of their being sworn in, who were specially selected in 1592 to carry out the persecution of recusants. Saxton's original map of Lancashire was published in 1577

¹²¹ 'A World Elsewhere: Shakespeare's Sense of an Exit', Shakespeare Lecture, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 117 (2001), pp. 165–99, (p. 169). In this essay, Wilson, often rather forcefully, places Shakespeare's plays in Catholic contexts — that is, Shakespeare's plays are *Catholicised*. For example, he yokes together the theme of inwardness and outwardness that occupies Hamlet's mind with church papistry (p. 173), and Lear with the Catholic Northamptonshire gentleman Sir Thomas Tresham (p. 190). For church papistry, see chapter 6 in the present thesis.

¹²² 'A World Elsewhere: Shakespeare's Sense of an Exit', p. 172.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 172. Wilson claims that Cecil had a 'map-room' (but I have never heard of it).

¹²⁴ The British Library, Royal MS, 18.D.III, Burghley Atlas.

(while others range from 1574 to 1579). It is assumed that Saxton himself drew up the map of Lancashire for Cecil (fol. 82) from his original map of 1577. To many of the gentlemen's names and residences Cecil added a cross '+' to indicate those who required special coercion.¹²⁵ Among them was Richard Hoghton of Park Hall. For Hoghton Tower Cecil inserted 'Tho: Houghton de Tower Fugitive'. The Tower, however, is *not* marked with a cross. Wilson's description of 'Shakespeare's benefactor' as being located in 'the "dark corners" of Lancashire routes of escape or invasion' is an inaccurate *Catholicisation* of Shakespeare's 'lost years'.¹²⁶

Katherine Duncan-Jones

In the most recent biography *Ungentle Shakespeare: Scenes from his Life* (2001), Katherine Duncan-Jones intentionally refused to discuss the Lancastrian theories (as well as John Shakespeare's 'spiritual testament', Hand D in the manuscript of *Sir Thomas More* and Simon Forman's *Booke of Plaies*). She explained that she had 'yet to be convinced' that the 1581 will of Alexander Hoghton 'ha[s] anything to tell us about Shakespeare'. She commented, as did Hamer, that 'Shakeshafte' was a common name in Lancashire, and that 'the possible means by which William Shakespeare of Stratford, aged seventeen, might have been recruited into the household of Alexander Hoghton of Lancashire as a player, tutor or musician have never been explained to my satisfaction'.¹²⁷

Robert Bearman

Duncan-Jones's objection clearly indicates the division or split in the field of Shakespeare biography. Her aim was not to tackle certain problems of the Lancastrian

¹²⁵ Joseph Gillow, 'Lord Burghley's Map of Lancashire, 1590', in *Miscellanea IV*, Catholic Record Society Publications 4 (London: Arden for Catholic Record Society, 1907), pp. 162–222. This publication contains a small facsimile of the map. In the Public Record Office, the map is bound up with the state papers of 1590. Gillow thus dates the map to 1590.

¹²⁶ 'A World Elsewhere: Shakespeare's Sense of an Exit', p. 172.

¹²⁷ *Ungentle Shakespeare*, p. xii.

theories, but to explain why her biography did not mention ‘William Shakeshafte’ while both academic and non-academic biographers had previously discussed the identity of the man. The first serious challenge to the Lancastrian theories since Schoenbaum’s death was launched by Robert Bearman, archivist of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

According to Bearman’s study, during the hundred years between 1530 and 1630, around 120 baptisms, marriages and burials of Shakeshaftes were entered in surviving parish registers in Lancashire. Over this period there were sixty-six entries of Shakeshaftes in the parish registers for Preston, fifteen in those for Warrington, ten in those for Stalmine and seven in those for Wigan. This is not a full picture, for the registers for these three parishes are deficient, most regrettably those for Preston, which only begins in 1611. The registers for Warrington begin in 1591, those for Stalmine in 1583 and those for Wigan in 1580. The entries relating to Shakeshaftes in the Preston and the Stalmine registers occur more or less around these start dates; Bearman thus suggested that Shakeshaftes had lived in these two parishes at an earlier date. In the Warrington registers the first entry of Shakeshaftes occurs in 1594, three years after the registers begin. Bearman, therefore, believed that it was ‘unwise to assume the presence of a resident Shakeshafte family from this early period’. The Wigan registers have seven entries before 1630, but none of them is before 1608, although the registers begin in 1580. Furthermore, a series of wills, documents relating to land disputes and a lay subsidy roll of 1593 reveal that other Shakeshafte families were living in the hamlets around Preston, notably in Cadley, Fulwood and Broughton. Shakeshaftes, therefore, were mainly to be found in the Preston area.¹²⁸

The Hoghtons held a number of estates in the Preston area, and Bearman, by locating

¹²⁸ “‘Was William Shakespeare William Shakeshafte?’: Revisited’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 53 (2002), 83–94 (pp. 86–8).

those estates one by one, decisively illustrated that ‘the preponderance of Shakeshafte families in the Preston area [. . .] coincides [. . .] with the epicentre of the Hoghton family’s sphere of influence [. . .]’. He thus concluded that Shakeshafte in Alexander’s will ‘must have been a local man, drawn into the Hoghton household in a perfectly natural way’.¹²⁹

As we have seen, Honigmann declared that ‘Hamer’s [tontine] argument collapse[d]’ because ‘the figures do not bear out’ his theory.¹³⁰ As Bearman pointed out, only eleven annuitants were named in Hoghton’s will, and neither Barton nor Bond was among them (appendix B.1). Their names, along with twenty-eight others, appeared in Hoghton’s will in order ‘to define the period during which the annuities were to be paid’ (see appendix B.2). Since Barton and Bond were not beneficiaries, Bearman speculated that Hoghton may have seen their role ‘as guarantors’, as in the case of some others — Henry Brown, John Cotham, James Hoghton, James Pemberton and William Rigby — who ‘represented local freeholders’, in order to ‘ensure that the annuities would continue to be paid’. Hoghton’s concern over the assurance of the distribution of the annuities each time one of the beneficiaries died seems clear where his will states: ‘I truste that whosoeu[er] shall fortune to be the Iudge for matter[es] in the Chancerye ffrom tyme to tyme wyll see [my will] dulye executed accordinge to Equitye & good Consyence’. Bearman thus concluded that ‘whatever the reason Barton and Bond were included in the will, it was not as annuitants’, and their ages which Honigmann deduced, are ‘therefore irrelevant to any discussion of the validity of Hamer’s proposition’. According to Hamer’s theory, Honigmann’s discovery that Costen, who was to receive an annuity of £1, was twenty-

¹²⁹ Ibid., 88–9 (p. 89).

¹³⁰ *Shakespeare: The ‘Lost Years’*, p. 17. Honigmann argued: Thomas Barton, who was around 44, and Henry Bond, aged 55, would have to be among the younger annuitants according to Hamer’s theory because they were left no specified sums. Thomas Costen, aged around 29, would have to be older than Barton and Bond, since he was left an annuity of £1.

nine in 1581, would ironically put the age of Shakeshafte, who was to receive an annuity of £2, 'far beyond any possibility that he could have been William Shakespeare'.¹³¹

Hoghton's non-annuitant servants were to receive bequests in a different way.

Hoghton, earlier in the bequest in question, stated:

I give unto every one of my servants that shall fortune to be in my service at the time of my decease & is or shall be hired with me for yearly wages, be they men or wom[e]n, to every one of them one whole year's wages.¹³²

For instance, Barton, who was Hoghton's steward, was therefore to receive a sum equivalent to his one-year wage when Hoghton died, although he did not receive any annuity. If Bond was a servant to Hoghton, he was, like Barton, to receive his one-year wage at Hoghton's death.

Honigmann's legal colleague commented that it was nonsense 'to deduce the ages of annuitants from the comparative size of the annuities given to them' as Hamer had done, for other aspects to be considered include: satisfaction with the servant, long service by the servant, status of the servant . . . other resources of the servant . . .'.¹³³ According to this proposition, if Shakeshafte is to be identified with

Shakespeare, it would mean that 'a young man of seventeen, who would have been in Hoghton's service no more than a few months, had somehow achieved precedence over a half of Hoghton's servants and was on an equal footing with three others'.¹³⁴

Costen, who was to receive £1 as his annuity, had in the late 1570s been sent 'into England divers and sundry times yearly to [. . .] Richard Hoghton to receive money of him to his use'.¹³⁵ Bearman believed that this risky service would make it difficult to

¹³¹ "Was William Shakespeare William Shakeshafte?": Revisited', 83–94.

¹³² Transcribed in Honigmann, *Shakespeare: The 'Lost Years'*, p. 136. This passage is not transcribed in David George, ed., *Lancashire, Records of Early English Drama Series* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

¹³³ Quoted in Honigmann, *Shakespeare: The 'Lost Years'*, p. 17.

¹³⁴ Bearman, "Was William Shakespeare William Shakeshafte?": Revisited', 90.

¹³⁵ Quoted in Honigmann, *Shakespeare: The 'Lost Years'*, p. 17.

accept that ‘the much younger William Shakespeare, a recent arrival in the household, would have become a more favoured beneficiary’ under Hoghton’s will.¹³⁶

As Bearman concludes, the Lancastrian theories require us to accept the unlikely scenario ‘that Hoghton saddled his trustees with the tiresome duty of maintaining lifelong contact with a young man, recently arrived from’ Warwickshire, ‘and with no proven record of service within the household, to whom an annuity, augmented each time one of the co-beneficiaries died, would need to be paid for life’.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ “‘Was William Shakespeare William Shakeshafte?’: Revisited’, 93

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 93.

ENGLANDS HELICON.

Casta placent superis,
pura cum veste venite,
Et manibus puris
sumite fontis aquam.



AT LONDON
Printed by I. R. for *Iohn Flasket*, and are
to be sold in Paules Church-yard, at the signe
of the Béare. 1600.



Euphues golden Legacie, found af-
ter his death in his Cell at Sile-
xeda.

BEQVEATHED TO PHILAVTUS
Sonnes, nourfed vp with their Father in
England.

Fetcht from the Canaries by T. L. Gent.



DONDON,
Printed by Abell effes for T. G.
and Iohn Busbr. 1592.

T H E
P H O E N I X
N E S T.

Built vp with the most rare
and refined workes of Noble
*men, woorthy Knights, gallant
Gentlemen, Masters of
Arts, and braue
Schollers.*

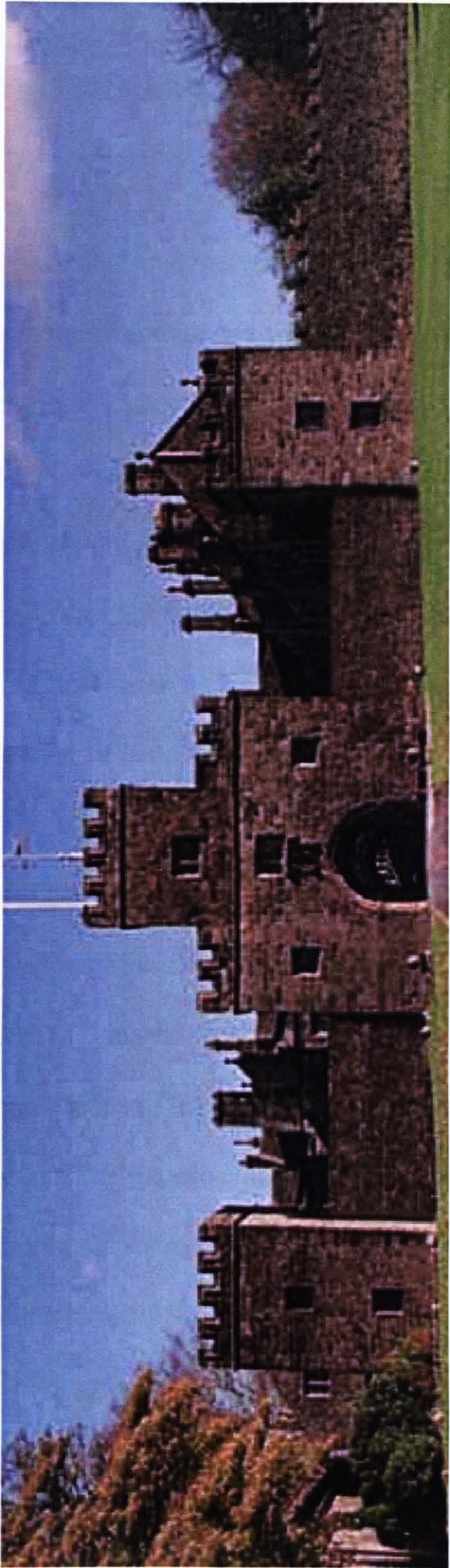
Full of varietie, excellent inuen-
tion, and singular
delight.

Neuer before this time published.

Set foorth by R. S. of
the Inner Temple
Gentleman.

Imprinted at London, by
Iohn Iackson.

1 5 9 3



10. Houghton Tower (near Preston, Lancashire)

Evidence, Fact and Interpretation: Shakespeare's Parents and His Marriage

In the last two chapters, I have analysed the ways in which Lancastrians have Catholicised Shakespeare in the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries. Along with the identification of Shakeshafte, Lancastrians, with the help of non-Lancastrian biographers (especially, two German critics, H. Mutschmann and K. Wentersdorf¹), have looked into Shakespeare's religious background during his childhood and youth, which they believe may have brought the boy Shakespeare into the Lancashire Catholic network during his 'lost years'. This biographical study involves examination of a series of events in the lives of his parents, John Shakespeare and Mary *née* Arden, and the dramatist's marriage, which have become part of the Lancastrian theories. The documentary evidence for these events, however, consists of ambiguities; since it is possible to interpret it in various ways, biographers could provide us with different scenarios. Most biographers who insist that Shakespeare was Catholic tend to disregard alternative interpretations of the evidence, which would weaken or even contradict their own theories.² Their approaches to Shakespeare biography amplify the paucity or simplify the complexity of documentary evidence and produce narrowness of view. Their analyses of the lives of Shakespeare's parents and his marriage as well as the evidence for his own biography must be re-examined.

¹ *Shakespeare and Catholicism* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1952).

² One notable exception is Honigmann, whose extensive analyses of documents and counter-arguments can be observed in his *Shakespeare: The 'Lost Years'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985).

I. John Shakespeare's Financial Difficulty

John Shakespeare was elected a taster of ale and bread in September 1556.³ On 30 April 1557 he was put on the list of a jury of the frankpledge, but it appears that he did not serve, for his name is cancelled. On 1 October he did serve as one of the jurors.⁴ Sometime in October or November he was chosen one of the burgesses, for his name does not appear in the official enumeration of the members of the corporation registered on 29 September, while he was cited in a record dated 1 December.⁵ A year later he was appointed one of four constables.⁶ On 6 October 1559 (and 4 May 1561), he witnessed the minutes of the frankpledge as one of the '*affurares* [affeerors]' whose task was 'to assess fines not prescribed by the statutes'.⁷ According to Schoenbaum, 'shortly afterwards — just when is uncertain — the town fathers elected him one of the fourteen principal burgesses, who sat monthly at nine o'clock of the forenoon' in the Guild Hall'.⁸ From Michaelmas 1561/2 to Michaelmas 1565, he served as a chamberlain.⁹ On 4 July 1565 he was elected an alderman and sworn on 12 September.¹⁰ On 3 September 1567 he was entered as one of the three nominees for bailiff of the borough. He received three votes to sixteen for Robert Perrott. Neither served, so a third nominee, Rafe Cawdrey, butcher in Bridge Street, filled the office in January 1568. On 4 September 1568 John was elected bailiff and sworn on 1 October. On 5 September 1571 he was appointed chief alderman, deputy to the new bailiff,

³ *Minutes and Accounts*, I: 1553–1566, p. xxxiv; *Documentary Life*, p. 29; Honan, *Shakespeare: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 8.

⁴ *Minutes and Accounts*, I: 1553–1566, pp. 58, 70 and 102; *Outlines*, II, pp. 216 and 219.

⁵ *Outlines*, II, p. 217. The earliest report of the minutes of the corporation meeting known to exist is that of 20 December 1563.

⁶ *Minutes and Accounts*, I: 1553–1566, p. 90; *Documentary Life*, p. 29.

⁷ *Minutes and Accounts*, I: 1553–1566, pp. 101 and 119; *Documentary Life*, p. 30. On the second occasion he used a mark of a pair of compasses.

⁸ *Documentary Life*, p. 30. Fripp, however, notes that John was elected a principal burgess in the autumn of 1557 (*Minutes and Accounts*, I: 1553–1566, p. xxxvi).

⁹ *Minutes and Accounts*, I: 1553–1566, pp. 120–52; *Outlines*, pp. 219–27.

¹⁰ *Minutes and Accounts*, I: 1553–1566, pp. 145–7; *Outlines*, p. 227. In the minute of the town corporation on 4 July his name, in consequence of his election, appears in both lists of aldermen and burgesses.

Adrian Quiney, but for some reason he was not officially recognised until next month.¹¹ He held the position until 3 September 1572.

At the beginning of 1577 John Shakespeare suddenly ceased to attend the meetings of the Stratford corporation, although he appears to have formerly attended every corporation meeting whose proceedings are recorded (i.e., since 20 December 1563) with the exception of one occasion.¹² During 1577 six meetings were registered, but there is only one at which it is stated for certain that he was present (on 4 October).¹³ He never again attended a corporation meeting, with the exception of one occasion and another doubtful occasion.¹⁴ John was repeatedly summoned by his colleagues to commence re-attending the meetings, but he determinedly refused to do so. On 6 September 1586 the corporation dismissed him after his nine years of absence. '[A]t thys halle', the minute of the meeting reports, 'William Smythe and Richard Courte are Chosen to be Aldermen in the places of John Wheler & John Shaxpere for that mr wheler dothe desire to be put out of the Companye & mr Shaxspere dothe not Come to the halles when they be warned nor hathe not done of Longe tyme'.¹⁵

Mutschmann and Wentersdorf argue that 'the explanation for John Shakespeare's abrupt break with borough life [. . .] is to be found in his religious conviction', but they swiftly move on to a discussion of John's absence from church and fail to demonstrate why and how his religious conviction caused his withdrawal

¹¹ *Minutes and Accounts*, I: 1553–1566, pp. 5, 7, 12–4, 52–3 and 54.

¹² At the meeting held on 27 September (wrongly dated 'October' by Richard Symons) 1565 he is noted among the 'aldermen abcent' (*Minutes and Accounts*, I: 1593–1566, pp. 147–8; *Outlines*, II, 227).

¹³ The minute of the meeting lists only names of those present including John Shakespeare.

¹⁴ In the minute of the meeting on 5 September 1582 a prick (indicating 'presence') appears against John's name. It was an election day, and an 'S' (a vote for John Sadler for the office of bailiff) also appears against his name (see *Minutes and Accounts*, III: 1577–1586, pp. 99–100). Although a prick appears against his name in the minute of the meeting held on 31 August 1586, it is believed to be a mistake since the minute of 6 September states that 'm' Shaxpere dothe not Come to the halles when they be warned nor hathe not done of Longe tyme' (*Minutes and Accounts*, III: 1577–1586, pp. 168 and 170). Fripp suggests that the prick should be against the name of Wheeler, who may have been present on 5 September to request 'to be put out of the Companye' (*ibid.*, p. 170).

¹⁵ *Minutes and Accounts*, II: 1566–1577, p. 11.

from the corporation meetings.¹⁶ Patrick Collinson suggests that John withdrew himself because he was ‘most probably an unreconstructed Catholic of the old sort who was a potential and perhaps an actual “convert” of the missionary priests who had penetrated to the vicinity of Stratford by 1580’.¹⁷ We are, however, not given any evidence that the missionary priests ‘penetrated to the vicinity of Stratford by 1580’. Collinson fails to prove that missionary priests ‘converted’ John before January 1577. Schoenbaum, on the other hand, observes that John’s ‘religious views (whatever they were) need not have forced him away from the halls’.¹⁸ Among John’s brethren, George Badger was Catholic, and Nicolas Barnhurst was either Catholic or Puritan; yet both kept their posts and attended meetings.¹⁹

A large amount of other evidence relating to John’s life during this period tells us another story; it leads on to the view that John’s debts may well have caused his absence from the corporation meetings because sheriff’s officers could have arrested him at the Guildhall where the meetings took place. The corporation appears to have been aware of John’s financial difficulty. At the corporation meeting on 29 January 1578 there was a levy on the inhabitants of the town for ‘the furniture of thre[e] pikemen ij billmen & one archer’, but John, though he was an alderman, was assessed at the assessment of burgesses (half the assessment of the other aldermen). It is recorded that John’s levy was ‘vnpayd’ in March 1579.²⁰ Thomas Carter believes that this is ‘a case of refusal, and not of inability to pay’ on the ground that ‘the names of

¹⁶ P. 44.

¹⁷ ‘William Shakespeare’s Religious Inheritance and Environment’, in *Elizabethan Essays* (London: Hambledon, 1994), pp. 219–52 (p. 250).

¹⁸ *Documentary Life*, p. 39.

¹⁹ For the attendances of Barnhurst and Badger, see *Minutes and Accounts*, III–V. According to Fripp and Schoenbaum, Barnhurst was Puritan (Fripp, *Shakespeare’s Stratford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1928), p. 38, and *Man and Artist*, I, p. 193; Schoenbaum, *Documentary Life*, p. 42). None of them provides evidence. F. W. Brownlow, on the other hand, claims that Barnhurst was Catholic because his name appears on the recusant returns of 1592 and he was removed from the town council. See my discussion of Barnhurst in section II of this chapter.

²⁰ *Minutes and Accounts*, I: 1577–1586, pp. 10 and 31; *Outlines*, II, pp. 235–6.

known well-to-do people are included in the list' (of those levied or of the defaulters?) and that 'the fact of his known ability and possession of property was the reason why the levy was made on him as a qualified rate-payer'.²¹ Carter's account does not carry conviction. Firstly, if it was a 'known' fact that John was capable of paying the full-rate levy, it is odd that the corporation reduced the assessment. Secondly, the minute clearly states that it is because John was an alderman that the levy was made on him.

The Stratford corporation let John off a fine and another levy in the same year. The corporation did not fine John for his absence on election day (3 September 1578), while it fined Wheeler (being an alderman) 20s. and William Smith (being a principal burgess) 10s. for their absence.²² A similar account is recorded in the minute of the meeting on 19 November: 'yt ys ordered [*sic*] that euery alderman shall paye weekly towards the releif [*sic*] of the poore iiij^d savinge m^r. John shaxpeare and m^r Rob't bratt who shall not be taxed to paye any thinge'.²³ Halliwell-Phillipps notes that Bratt 'who was a weaver, seems to have been one of the poorest members of the [c]orporation, his subscriptions in the plague year of 1564, although he was then a alderman, being, with a single exception, the lowest of all in amount'.²⁴ Although the last event is discussed in Halliwell-Phillips' *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare* (1881; 7th edn, 1887),²⁵ and the information was thus available to Mutschmann and Wentersdorf, they do not refer to this event. Their neglect may be because the document does not help them to identify John as a Catholic.

What these documents concerning John's finance suggest becomes clearer once they are contrasted with the minute of the corporation meeting on 5 December 1576, which John attended. The minute reports:

²¹ *Shakespeare, Puritan, and Recusant* (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant Anderson & Ferrier, 1897), p. 114. It should be noted that Carter believes that John refused to pay the levy because he was a Puritan.

²² *Minutes and Accounts*, III: 1577–1586, p. 19.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 24; *Outlines*, II, p. 235.

²⁴ *Outlines*, II, p. 235.

²⁵ Pp. 235 and 241.

it ys also ordened [*sic*] and agreed vpon that euery alderman shall pay (savage m^r lewes and m^r Plumley) xij^d a pece this present yere towards the wages of the common bedyll, and the seid m^r lewes and m^r plumley to pay viij^d a pece, and all the burgeses shall pay iiij^d a pece this present yere savage that m^r nicholas barnehurst shall pay for his part xij^d towards the wages of the seid bedyll.²⁶

At the end of 1576 John does not appear to have been considered too poor to pay 12d., whereas in the following year his levies were once reduced to the amount assessed on a burgess and once let off, and he was excused a fine. The comparison of these minutes of the corporation meetings reveals that by the late 1570s John was incapable of payments of the levies and fine and that the corporation acknowledged his financial difficulty.

By arrangement made on 12 November 1578, John and Mary Shakespeare and George Gibbes conveyed eighty-six acres in Wilmcote, including six of meadow and ten of pasture, to Thomas Webbe and Humphrey Hopper, who in return granted a lease of the property to Gibbes for twenty-one years from Michaelmas 1580 at the annual rental of '*medietatis unius quarterii tritici et medietatis unius quarterii ordeii*' [the moiety of one quarter of wheat and the moiety of one quarter of barley]. At Michaelmas 1601 the land was to revert to the Shakespeares for Mary's heirs.²⁷

Mutschmann and Wentersdorf comment that this is 'a mysterious transaction, until one takes into account the conditions prevailing at the time and the danger in which the Shakespeares stood because of their Catholicism'.²⁸ This conveyance of their property, according to the German biographers, was the first of the 'three noteworthy steps' which the Shakespeares took 'to safeguard' their properties 'from seizure by the authorities [. . .] on account of his Catholicism'.²⁹ The German biographers, however, neglect the fact that Gibbes was one of those who conveyed the

²⁶ *Minutes and Accounts*, II: 1566–1577, p. 112.

²⁷ The transaction or 'fine' (Hilary term, 21 Eliz.) in its entirety is printed in *Outlines*, II, p. 202–3 (Halliwell-Phillipps's translation). The cited passage is on p. 202.

²⁸ P. 47. Mutschmann and Wentersdorf conjecture that Thomas Webbe may have been related to the Ardens through Agnes Arden.

²⁹ P. 47.

property. This conveyance is not a 'mysterious account' once Gibbes's role is taken into consideration. As noted already, the property was leased to Gibbes. Mark Eccles suggests that 'Gibbes, who probably held the land by lease, secured a new lease and had it on record in Queen's Bench by means of a fine to Webbe and Hooper, acting as trustees'. Eccles speculates that, although the Shakespeares did not sell or mortgage the property, Gibbes 'probably made the usual payment for a new lease'.³⁰

On 14 November 1578 the Shakespeares borrowed £40 by mortgaging a part of Mary's inheritance (a house and fifty-six acres at Wilmcote in the parish of Aston Cantlow) to her brother-in-law, Edmund Lambert of Barton on the Heath, to whom John Shakespeare had already owed money.³¹ The loan was due Michaelmas 1580, but John did not discharge it; therefore, Lambert held on to the property. Lambert was still in possession when he died in the spring of 1587, and the property passed to his son, John.³² Two years later the Shakespeares brought an action in the court of Queen's Bench in Westminster against John Lambert. According to the bill, the Shakespeares claimed that John Lambert had agreed to purchase the estate from the Shakespeares and their son, William, outright for £20.³³ It has been suggested that William was a party to this agreement probably in respect of some right of inheritance. Lambert did not pay £20, so the Shakespeares brought a suit for £30 damages. Lambert denied making the alleged agreement. David Thomas of the Public

³⁰ *Shakespeare in Warwickshire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1961; repr. 1963), p. 30.

³¹ The property in question is taken by Lee, Halliwell-Phillips, Fripp and Schoenbaum to be Robert Arden's 'lande in Willmecote cawlid Asbyes', which he bequeathed to Mary by his will of 24 November 1556 (Lee, *A Life of William Shakespeare* (London: Smith, Elder; New York: Macmillan, 1898), pp. 11–2; Halliwell-Phillips, *Outlines*, II, p. 202; Fripp, *Minutes and Accounts*, III: 1577–1586, p. xxxvi; Schoenbaum, *Documentary Life*, p. 37). Chambers, on the other hand, insists that it is 'more than doubtful' (*Facts and Problems*, II, p. 38–9). The original fine is printed in Halliwell-Phillips, *The Life of William Shakespeare* (London: John Russell Smith, 1848), p. 53.

³² Lambert died on 1 March according to the bill of complaint, but around 23 April according to the burial register of Barton.

³³ David Thomas states that it was Edmund Lambert who made the agreement to purchase the estate from the Shakespeares. (David Thomas and Jane Cox, *Shakespeare in the Public Records* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1985), p. 5. The bill, however, reports that it was 'Johannem Lamberte'.

Record Office reports that '[a] date was set for a formal hearing, but after the initial entry of the pleading on the plea roll there is no more record of the case'.³⁴

The decision of the court is not recorded, but evidently, the Shakespeares did not get back either their estate or the money, for ten years later (1597) the Shakespeares attempted to recover the property in the court of Chancery.³⁵ This time they claimed that John had offered to repay the loan of £40 to Edmund Lambert, but that the latter had refused either to accept the money or to return the estate on the ground of John's other debts owing to him. Confirmation of John's old debts exists: on 14 November 1578 — incidentally, the very day on which the Shakespeares mortgaged Mary's estate in Wilmcote to Lambert — Roger Sadler, a baker in Sheep Street, drew up his last will and testament, in which he noted that Lambert and another owed him £5 'for the debt of M^r John Shacksper'.³⁶ John Lambert denied the alleged tender and explained that the action was brought because a lease made by the Shakespeares was nearly expired and the value of the property would be raised. Once again there is no record of the court's decision. By 1599 the property had passed to the family of Etkyns, which was connected by marriage with both the Shakespeares and the Lamberts.

Meanwhile, the Shakespeares exchanged another property in 1579. This time it was their ninth part (a sixth of two thirds) in the two houses and hundred acres in Snitterfield, the property which, according to Eccles and Schoenbaum, had been

³⁴ Thomas and Cox, p. 5; *Documentary Life*, p. 37. The bill of complaint in Queen's Bench (Michaelmas Term, 1588) is printed in Halliwell-Phillipps, *Outlines*, II, pp. 11–3 and in Chambers, *Facts and Problems*, II, pp. 35–7. A facsimile of a small part of John's complaint against John Lambert is printed in Thomas and Cox, p. 5. Thomas Carter regards this transaction of the property as a means to safeguard it from seizure on account of John Shakespeare's Puritan recusancy (*Shakespeare, Puritan, and Recusant* (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant Anderson & Ferrier, 1897), pp. 94–108).

³⁵ According to Thomas, the Shakespeares brought a Chancery suit eight (not ten) years later (p. 5).

³⁶ Halliwell-Phillipps, *The Life of William Shakespeare*, p. 52. See also Chambers, *Facts and Problems*, II, p. 37, and Schoenbaum, *Documentary Life*, p. 37. The papers in the Chancery suit are printed (in English) in Halliwell-Phillipps, *Outlines*, II, pp. 14–7, and *The Life of William Shakespeare*, pp. 60–4.

leased to Alexander Webbe.³⁷ They sold it to Webbe's son, Robert, for £4 on 15 October 1579. John and Mary signed by mark an indenture and a bond, in the presence of Nicholas Knooles (or Knoolles), vicar of Aston Cantlow, Anthony Osbaston and William Maydes (or Meades), a neighbour in Henley Street.³⁸ It was confirmed by a fine in Easter term 1580.³⁹

Some biographers have neglected the evidence for John's other debts. Among the unnumbered pages of the fines for Trinity term (3–22 June), 1580, at the end of Coram Rege Roll, Charlotte Carmichael Stopes found 'two separate yet connected cases'.⁴⁰ It is reported that John was due to pay £20 because he had not appeared before the Queen's court at Westminster as summoned. His two sureties (John Awdlet of Nottingham and Thomas Collet of Stoke, Staffordshire) were to pay a fine of £10 each for not having produced him. The second case reports that John Awdelay was to be fined £40 because when summoned he did not appear before Queen's court, bringing sufficient security to be bound over to keep the peace. John Shakespeare, one of the two securities for Awdeley, and Thomas Colley, another of the securities, were to pay £20 each because they did not bring Awdeley before the court on the appointed date.⁴¹

³⁷ Chambers, on the other hand, suggests that it was not the property leased to Alexander Webbe. According to him, the property leased to Webbe had been held by Robert Arden. After his death his widow, Agnes leased it to Webbe at 40s. for forty years from 25 March 1561. Its tenants were Richard Shakespeare, John Henley and John Hargreve. Shakespeare's occupation, Chambers suggests, probably terminated on Richard's death on 1560 or 1561 because Webbe himself was occupying the property in 1569. A new lease at £4 was granted (by Agnes, according to Chambers) to Webbe's son, Robert, shortly after her death in 1580. See *Facts and Problems*, II, p. 40.

³⁸ The deed and the bond are printed in Halliwell-Phillipps, *The Life of William Shakespeare* (London: John Russell Smith, 1848), pp. 54–7 and 57–8 respectively.

³⁹ Chambers and Eccles note that the fine records the sale price of £40, which, they suggest, is not the actual sum (Chambers, *Facts and Problems*, p. 40; Eccles, p. 30), whereas Lee claims that it is the 'correct' sum (*A Life of William Shakespeare*, p. 12).

⁴⁰ Stopes, *Shakespeare's Environment* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1914), p. 41.

⁴¹ *Minutes and Accounts*, III: 1577–1586, p. 68.

Mutschmann and Wentersdorf believe that John was summoned and fined for recusancy, and James P. Conlan accepts their account.⁴² However, under the 1559 Act of Uniformity, recusants were subject to ecclesiastical censure and were to pay a fine of 1s. (12p). The fine was to be collected by the churchwardens of the offender's parish and to be used for the poor of the same parish (1 Eliz. c. 2 § 3). In other words, the fine was 'collected locally and used locally'. It was, as Francis Xavier Walker asserts, 'a parish matter';⁴³ therefore, there is no reason to believe that John was sent to the Queen's court at Westminster for recusancy.

Some biographers consider the Shakespeares' transactions in relations to their properties as subterfuges to avoid paying fines imposed for recusancy. Mutschmann and Wentersdorf comment that because John 'feared the confiscation of his possessions on account of his Catholicism', he transferred his estates to his relatives 'to safeguard' them 'from seizure by the authorities'. The German biographers comment that John's actions are 'otherwise completely mysterious'. Conlan swallowed their argument without hesitation.⁴⁴ As we have seen, however, John was already in financial difficulty by the late 1570s, and it can be argued that he did in fact require ready cash. He did not let go his two houses in Henley Street, where in all probability William was born and lived with his family until he moved to London. We may suppose that, since one of the houses was the family residence, and the other a source for John's income, the Shakespeares decided to keep them for the family and to

⁴² Mutschmann and Wentersdorf, pp. 49–50; Conlan, 'Shakespeare's *Edward III*: A Consolation for English Recusants', *Comparative Drama* 35 (2001), 177–207 (p. 192).

⁴³ 'The Implementation of the Elizabethan Statutes against Recusants 1581–1603' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1961), p. 6. See also appendix A for my survey of the anti-recusant acts issued during Elizabeth's reign.

⁴⁴ Mutschmann and Wentersdorf, pp. 46–7; Conlan, 'Shakespeare's *Edward III*: A Consolation for English Recusants', 192.

give up their other properties for ready cash.⁴⁵

Before ending this section, let us see how the biographers who suspect a religious reason behind John's withdrawal from the corporation meetings treat the negative evidence that he was a member of the corporation that carried out the reformation of the Guild Chapel. John was chamberlain when the corporation ordered the proceedings referred to in the entry he made in the account book on 10 January 1564: 'Item payd for defasyng ymages in y^e chappell ij^s'.⁴⁶ Collinson argues that the fact 'that John Shakespeare was a municipal officer when the guild chapel was Protestantised proves nothing' because 'the fact that the great doom painting was whitewashed over rather than destroyed suggests the kind of crypto-Catholic conduct of which Puritans often complained'. But Collinson is not aware of other procedures that the corporation carried out for Protestantisation of the chapel.⁴⁷ The accounts for the following year (made on 21 March 1565) record a payment of two shillings 'for takynge doune y^e rood loft in y^e Chapell'.⁴⁸ John was present as chief alderman and deputy to the bailiff Adrian Quiney on 10 October 1571 when 'yt ys agreed [. . .] by the balie aldermen and capitall burgeses herein assembled that Mr Adrian Queny now balie of the borowgh [. . .] shuld sell the copes and vestments' of which an inventory is given in the minute of the corporation.⁴⁹ There is no record of the corporation's order to destroy the stained glass, but this does not necessarily suggest the corporation's backwardness in religion. It must not be neglected that the Elizabethan

⁴⁵ Gary Taylor asserts that the discovery of a series of documents in the exchequer have disproved John's financial difficulties in the 1580s and 1590s ('Forms of Opposition: Shakespeare and Middleton', *English Literary Renaissance* 24 (1994), 283–314 (p. 291)). However, these documents record John's wool dealing in the late 1560s and 1570s, not in the 1580s or in the 1590s (D. L. Thomas and N. E. Evans, 'John Shakespeare in the Exchequer', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 35 (1984), 315–8).

⁴⁶ *Minutes and Accounts*, I: 1553–1566, p. 128; Gray, p. 105; Carter, *Shakespeare, Puritan, and Recusant*, p. 27.

⁴⁷ 'William Shakespeare's Religious Inheritance and Environment', p. 250. It appears from his reference (p. 251, n. 45) that Collinson consulted only with works by de Groot, Mutschmann and Wentersdorf and Milward, but not corporation records themselves.

⁴⁸ *Minutes and Accounts*, I: 1553–1566, p. 138; Gray, *Shakespeare's Marriage*, p. 105; Carter, *Shakespeare, Puritan, and Recusant*, p. 28.

⁴⁹ *Minutes and Accounts*, II: 1566–157, p. 54; Gray, *Shakespeare's Marriage*, p. 105.

injunctions ordered that in removing images, those in windows should be destroyed only if the windows were to be re-glazed. An addition to the injunctions commanded that 'no altar be taken down but by oversight of the curate of the church and the churchwardens, or one of them at the least' in order to avoid 'no riotous or disordered manner' — the sort of iconoclastic activities which had taken place in Edward's reign.⁵⁰

Mutschmann and Wentersdorf believe that that 'there is nothing [. . .] to indicate his personal views about this [Protestantising] procedure' because it was 'in any case carried out in compliance with government instructions, and very tardily at that'.⁵¹ Milward similarly argues that the reformation was 'forced upon the unwilling town corporation [. . .] by the combined insistence of the Protestant vicar and the visiting Bishop of Worcester', and that from these records 'no legitimate conclusion can be drawn as to his personal feelings about the matter' since John was 'merely acting in his official capacity'. It is true that the defacing of the chapel was a 'long-delayed step'.⁵² But if John was a Catholic and 'merely acting in his official capacity' when the corporation agreed to Protestantise the chapel, we may reasonably wonder why John could not continue to attend the corporation meetings 'in his official capacity'.

II. John Shakespeare's Absence from Church

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Warwickshire was under the divided Episcopal rule of the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield and the bishop of Worcester.

⁵⁰ *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, ed. by Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, 3 vols (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964), II: The Later Tudors (1553–1587), no. 460 'Announcing Injunctions for Religion' (p. 131).

⁵¹ P. 39.

⁵² *Shakespeare's Religious Background* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1973), p. 19.

The archdeaconry of Worcester included two Warwickshire deaneries of Kineton and Warwick. Stratford occupied part of the former deanery.⁵³ In November 1577 the bishop of Worcester held a parochial visitation of his diocese with the particular intention of detecting recusants. He forwarded to the Privy Council a list of those detected by the returns of the churchwardens. In the two Warwickshire deaneries the parish authorities returned only three names. To these, the bishop added seven others of substance not reported at the visitation, but currently supposed to absent themselves from church.

In the autumn of 1591 the government made a determined effort to identify those who refused to go to church. The Privy Council, prompted by the zeal of John Whitgift, archbishop of Canterbury (1583–1604), launched its first periodical inquisition into the religious status of the realm. On 23 November 1591 the Council appointed ‘persons of honest behaviour and loyal in religion’ as commissioners in every ‘quarter of the shire’ to ‘observe all such as refused obstinately to resort to the church’, and to certify to the bishop and the Privy Council once a quarter seminary priests and Jesuits, and their supporters, both presented and suspected, as well as their clergy whether they were ‘careful to win them’.⁵⁴ The commissioners made their return at the end of March 1592.⁵⁵ Forty-one names were sent in from Stratford: seven either ‘suspect[ed]’ or ‘present[ed]’ for absence from church or for being or harbouring seminary priests or Jesuits; fifteen who had confessed and were ‘subscribed monthly’ for absence from church; six excused due to their ‘impotencye’; and four ‘excommunicated’ who ‘seeke not to bee restored’. The return also consisted of a list of nine Stratford men whom the commissioners ‘suspect[ed]’ ‘absent[ed]’

⁵³ J. C. Cox, ‘Ecclesiastical History’, in *The Victoria History of the County of Warwick*, ed. by William Page, 8 vols (London: Archibald Constable and Company for the Institute of Historical Research, University of London, 1908), II, pp. 35–7.

⁵⁴ Quoted in *Minutes and Accounts*, IV: 1586–1592, pp. xxxiv. See also p. 140.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 148–9. A facsimile of the return is printed in Schoenbaum, *Documentary Life*, p. 39.

themselves for feare of processes': 'M^r John Wheeler, John his sonne, M^r John Shackspeare, M^r Nycholas Barnehurst, Tho: James alias Giles, William Baynton, Rychard Harington, William Fluellen, George Bardell'.⁵⁶

Dissatisfied with the return, Whitgift imposed further inquisition. On 6 August Lord Berkeley reported to Sir Thomas Lucy and the rest of the commissioners that he had received an instruction on 23 July from the Privy Council. On the 24th he wrote again suggesting a meeting at Coventry on 'Tuesday next' (the 29th). After meetings at Warwick on 20 and 25 September and 4 October, the commissioners submitted a 'seconde Certificat [*sic*]'.⁵⁷ Of Stratford it reported: three men continued to be 'willfull' recusants; and one seminary priest or Jesuit was indicted, but they did not know where he was at that time. The return then listed '[t]he Names of all sutch Recusantes As haue bene hearetofore presented for not comminge Monethlie to the Church', who 'are thoughte to forbear the Church for debtte and for feare of processe, Or for soom other worse faultes, Or for Age, sicknes, or impotencye of bodie'. For Stratford, there were a couple of emendations: four of the six reported in the first return were still excused 'for age and other infirmities'; one of the other two had conformed, and the other was dead. Yet the list of those reported 'to forbear the Church for debtte and for feare of processe' remained the same as that of the first return.

Some biographers' treatment of the returns in question has been careless. Anthony Holden, for example, claims that John Shakespeare's name appears 'among lists of recusants who "refused obstinately" to attend church "for fear of process for debt"'.⁵⁸ This is part of his 'tabloid Shakespeare': neither of the two returns reports

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 148–9. Curiously, two names in Shakespeare's *Henry V* — Fluellen and Bardolfe — appear among the nine Stratford men. ('Bardell' is spelled 'Bardolfe' in the second return.)

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. xxxviii and 159.

⁵⁸ *William Shakespeare: His Life and Work*, (London: Little, Brown, 1999), p. 112.

that John ‘refused obstinately’; the phrase simply does not appear either in the first or the second return in the way he quotes. A similar phrase appears in the second return, but it is the classification of a group listed among other groups, and it is not the classification embracing the nine Stratford men among whom John’s name appears. The exact phrase appears in the 1593 act to describe Protestant, not Catholic, recusants (see appendix A). Holden’s lack of precision dramatises the scenario and misguides uncritical readers. Moreover, the returns alone do not tell us whether or not John was Catholic. If, as Fripp claims, some of the nine Stratford men are ‘unmistakably puritans’, we cannot conclude that John was a Catholic recusant simply because his name appears on the list of those who absented themselves for reason of debt or fear of arrest.⁵⁹ In addition, none of the nine men appeared on the recusant roll for 1592–3 (or that for 1593–4).⁶⁰ Leonard Alves argues that John’s debt referred to in the returns was the £20 recusancy fine previously imposed on him.⁶¹ If it had been so, John’s name should have appeared on the recusant roll. Besides, continuing recusancy would only worsen the situation (see appendix A). Alves appears to be unfamiliar with the anti-recusant acts.

Carter regards the two returns as conclusive evidence for John Shakespeare’s Puritanism. This observation, however, is based on the entirely wrong concept that ‘Papists were persecuted for being Papists, not for forbearing attendance at the parish church’.⁶² As I show in chapter 6 and appendix A, church attendance was Elizabeth’s touchstone to detect disloyal subjects both Catholic and Puritan. F. W. Brownlow argues that ‘the notion of a “Puritan recusant” is, in the present context, a red herring traceable, like several misconceptions of this document, to E. I. Fripp’. Brownlow’s

⁵⁹ *Minutes and Accounts*, IV: 1586–1592, p. xxxvii.

⁶⁰ These recusant rolls are printed in Publications of the Catholic Record Society, 18 (1592–1593), pp. 325–343, and 57 (1593–1594), p. 182.

⁶¹ ‘Shakespeare and the “Old Religion”’, *English Literature and Language* 9 (1972), 43–64. I am grateful to Fr. Peter Milward for sending me a copy of this article.

⁶² *Shakespeare, Puritan, and Recusant*, p. 164.

reasoning is: '[i]n this period 'recusant', used in the context of religious obligation and allegiance, meant a Roman Catholic who refused to attend the services of the Church of England. This is the primary meaning given in the *Oxford Dictionary*, and [. . .] in this case more recent authorities agree with it'.⁶³

One of the 'more recent authorities' to whom Brownlow refers is Dom Hugh Bowler.⁶⁴ Yet Brownlow must have read Bowler's study carelessly or selected his account so as to make it fit with his own, for Bowler clearly states:

After 1586 [. . .] as their [church-absentees'] growth and consolidation increased, Protestant separatists were also given the title, semi-officially, for instance in the Commons debate on the anti-Sectary bill of 1593. [. . .] Not until the [. . .] Act of 1593 [35 Eliz. c. 2] was the term used *statutorily* in connection with religion. It was then applied specifically to Catholics [. . .], clearly defining them as "Popish Recusants" [. . .]⁶⁵

Protestant non-conformists, on the other hand, were named 'seditious Sectaries' and 'disloyall persons' (35 Eliz. c. 1 §1; see appendix A). The 1592 Warwickshire returns in question use the term 'recusants', not 'Popish recusants'. Unless we identify the religious beliefs of those listed on the returns, it appears to remain unclear whether 'recusants' in this particular case simply meant church absentees (whether Catholic or Protestant) in general or referred specifically to Catholic absentees.

The revisionist historian Eamon Duffy — whose *The Stripping of the Altars* (1992) is referred to by many Shakespeare biographers and critics in the course of Catholicisation — notes that '[i]n 1592 [John Shakespeare] appeared in the recusant rolls'.⁶⁶ The fact is that he did not. We must distinguish 'recusant returns' from 'recusant rolls'. Brownlow notes that the recusant rolls were 'not an annual census of Roman Catholics' but 'lists of fines owed to the Exchequer by recusants who have

⁶³ 'John Shakespeare's Recusancy: New Light on an Old Document', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40 (1989), 186–91 (p. 186).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 187, n. 5.

⁶⁵ Dom Hugh Bowler, introduction to *Recusant Roll, No 2 (1593–1594)*, Catholic Record Society Publications 57 (London: R. H. Johns for Catholic Record Society, 1965), p. ix (emphasis added).

⁶⁶ 'Was Shakespeare a Catholic?', *The Tablet*, 27 April 1996, pp. 536–8 (p. 536).

been indicted, tried and convicted for offenses under the statutes governing conformity to the established church'.⁶⁷ As I have already pointed out, none of the Stratford debtors appears on the recusant roll for 1592–3. In other words, none of them was ever a *convicted* recusant. They were only *suspected* to be recusants.

This is an important distinction because the wording of the two returns includes certain ambiguities. Schoenbaum states that 'the presenters and commissioners *clearly* stated on two occasions that John Shakespeare feared for debt';⁶⁸ however, the first return only states that the commissioners 'suspect' that these nine Stratford men do not attend church services, and the second return records that they '*are thoughte* to forbear the Church for debtte and for feare of processe', with the note on the right side of the list claiming that '*it is sayd* that these laste nine coom not to Church for feare of processe for Debtte'.⁶⁹ Biographers' interpretations are divided in terms of whether the quoted phrases reveal the commissioners' scepticism or simply their uncertainty about the nine Stratford men's excuses: that it is supposed to suggest that the commissioners actually believed that the nine Stratford men's fear for process was a subterfuge (as Mutschmann, Wentersdorf and Milward interpret the evidence), or that the commissioners simply could not confirm the information presented to them (as Fripp reads it).

Brownlow argues that in order 'for the probability to increase dramatically that they were all Catholics and that the commissioners described their report accurately' — that is, the nine Stratford men were (Catholic) recusants — 'one need prove only that one or two of the nine "debtors" was a Catholic'. There is no need to point out that his logic is poor. Brownlow nevertheless suggests that four — not just 'one or two' — of them were Catholic. Firstly, he argues that Nicholas Barnhurst was

⁶⁷ Brownlow, 187.

⁶⁸ *Documentary Life*, p. 39 (emphasis added).

⁶⁹ *Minutes and Accounts*, IV: 1586–1592, p. 161 (emphasis added).

Catholic because ‘Barnhurst, like Wheeler, Shakespeare, and George Badger, a Stratford man known to have been a Catholic, was eventually removed from the town council’.⁷⁰ His evidence, however, is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, Barnhurst remained in office as alderman in October 1598,⁷¹ and Brownlow does not note exactly when it was that Barnhurst withdrew himself from the corporation. In the minutes of the corporation meetings and other accounts, Barnhurst’s name is occasionally spelled ‘Banester’. Since the latter spelling was used more frequently than the former after 1597, it is likely that Brownlow thought that Nicholas Banester was another man and that Barnhurst lost or withdrew from his post.

Secondly, although Badger was indeed removed from the corporation, and he was in fact a Catholic who went to prison for his recusancy, it is not clear if the town corporation invalidated his post on account of his religious belief. The minute of the meeting on 18 August 1596 reports that Badger was ‘thought by the greatest parte of the Company to be Baylyffe for the next yere’.⁷² He was absent from seven corporation meetings in 1597, and on 27 July it was reported that ‘George Badger for his wylfull refusinge to come to the Halle havinge lawfull warninge shalle forfeit the some of ffyve poundes to be payd to the Chamber [. . .]’ On 7 September he was elected to be a bailiff for the next year, but he refused to accept the office ‘in regard of his dissabilitie’. Yet the corporation, having examined the case on 30 September, concluded that ‘[y]t dothe appere by the voices of xix^{tene} (beinge the greater nomber) that the seyd George badger ys of sufficient habilitie [*sic*] to take the office vpon hym’.⁷³ He was absent from the meeting on 30 September, but attended all the

⁷⁰ Brownlow, 187.

⁷¹ This is the last entry of the minute of the corporation meeting transcribed in *Minutes and Accounts*.

⁷² *Minutes and Accounts*, V: 1593–1598, p. 88.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 108 and 110.

meetings in November and December.⁷⁴ His last attendance was on 13 January 1598 when the corporation agreed that ‘from hensfurthe George Badger shalle no longer be one of the Aldermen of this boroughe for that he wyll not be ordered by the statutes of the howsse’.⁷⁵

Brownlow suggests that the Wheelers were Catholic on the basis of two documents: in 1596 Bishop Bilson of Worcester reported to Cecil that the alderman’s son and his wife Elizabeth were wealthy recusants in the diocese,⁷⁶ and there is a record that as late as 1606 Wheeler and his son were refusing to take communion in the parish church. Harrington and Fluellen, for their part, were cited in the act book of the ecclesiastical court for not attending church and keeping their shops open on the Sabbath Days in November 1590.⁷⁷ The first entry of Harrington has an insertion ‘the entry to stand’ in the margin, and the second entry records ‘continued to the next court’. The first entry for Fluellen instructs that he should be ‘admonished to desist from the same fault’, and the second notes that ‘he appeared: admonished to desist from the same fault and to frequent the church’. The act book has no record of courts between December 1590 and October 1592 (which is a great pity for Shakespeare biographers), and neither Harrington nor Fluellen was cited in the proceeding years.

We must ask, then, why the nine Stratford men were not convicted of recusancy. This issue may not have disturbed Eric Sams, for he only notes that John was ‘twice arraigned [. . .] as a recusant’.⁷⁸ Brownlow suggests that local authorities made the returns vague on purpose because they were sympathetic towards the nine Stratford men. Local officers, he suspected, ‘did not like to push the penal laws too

⁷⁴ *Minutes and Accounts*, V: 1593–1598, does not record any corporation meeting in October.

⁷⁵ *Minutes and Accounts*, V: 1593–1598, p. 115.

⁷⁶ See Eccles’s study of the Wheelers’ financial difficulty below.

⁷⁷ Brownlow, 187–8; E. R. C. Brinkworth, *Shakespeare and the Bawdy Court of Stratford* (London: Phillimore, 1972), pp. 120–1 and 131. The entry of the Wheelers in the calendar is on p. 131, and Harrington and Fluellen on pp. 120–1.

⁷⁸ *The Real Shakespeare: Retrieving the Early Years, 1564–1594* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 12.

hard against their friends and neighbo[u]rs'.⁷⁹ Mutschmann and Wentersdorf, on the other hand, assume that the commissioners did not bother to check with the local authorities; however, it can be argued that their speculation rests heavily on their biased presumption that the nine Stratford men's fear of process was a subterfuge.

The case appears more complicated, and we should not neglect the possibility that the commissioners' wording reveals their uncertainty instead of scepticism. The commissioners obtained the names of the nine Stratford men directly from local authorities at Stratford (most likely churchwardens of the parish church⁸⁰) rather than from the bishop of Worcester, for since the death of Edmund Freake on 21 March 1591 and until the appointment of his successor, Richard Fletcher, in 1593, no bishop of Worcester was in office.⁸¹ Unlike the visitation of 1577, in which the bishop of Worcester took an active role, the commissioners could not confirm with the bishop the information they had received from the local authorities. They may not have been able to confirm with the local court of Stratford, either; the pages for the year in the act books of the ecclesiastical court of Stratford are left blank. 'Such pretexts', Fripp comments, 'were the more permissible in the absence of the diocesan' (i.e., the bishop).⁸²

Mutschmann and Wentersdorf suggest that the excuse of debt 'represents a deliberate attempt to mislead the authorities', and Milward observes that 'the excuse of debt was a not uncommon subterfuge of recusants who wished to avoid the

⁷⁹ Brownlow, 188.

⁸⁰ The act books of the ecclesiastical court of Stratford contain no records of court between December 1590 and October 1592. The calendar compiled by Brinkworth has an entry of Tuesday 10 October 1592 recording William Wylitt and John Smith as the 'churchwardens' for the present year (and Abraham Sturley and Arthur Boys for the preceding year). In his section on the roles of churchwardens and sidesmen, however, Brinkworth identifies them as sidesmen (p. 26). According to his note on the term 'sidesmen': 'The word in the original is *economi*; churchwardens are called *gardiani*. In *The Revised Medieval Latin Word List*, prepared by R. E. Latham (1965), *economus* in the ecclesiastical sense is given as meaning "churchwardens", but at Stratford it evidently meant "sidesman". This is the word used along with "churchwarden" when entries were in English' (p. 28, n. 5).

⁸¹ Fripp, *Minutes and Accounts*, IV: 1586–1592, p. xxxviii.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. xxxviii.

penalties for refusing to attend church'. Ian Wilson similarly suspects that John's 'apparent debt problems' were 'an example of a common subterfuge that Catholics employed to avoid the penalties for not attending church', and Brownlow suggests that the commissioners 'had no doubt'.⁸³ Yet the nine Stratford men's fear of process may well be a genuine excuse for their absence from church. Although the German biographers claim that of the nine Stratford men only George Bardell was sued for debt in 1592, and that against the other eight there were no suits pending in the courts, nor had there been any for some time, Mark Eccles has shown that most of the nine Stratford men were in fact suffering from debt. Alderman Wheeler had his properties distrained to pay two creditors in 1590 and to pay John Lane, Jr. in March 1591/2 before he died in November 1592. Wheeler's son was sued for debt by Thomas Trusell and by Ananias Nason in 1590. His house, it was reported several years later, had been 'very ruinous' and his barn 'readie to fall for rottennes'.⁸⁴ He was sued by Sir Edward Greville in 1601. Barnhurst's properties were distrained to pay George Badger in March 1591/2. Thomas Jones (according to Eccles, 'James' is an error) was sued in 1591, 1592 and 1593 and died in the almshouse in 1614. Baynton was sued in 1594 and 1595 and died in 1595. Harrington was sued in 1593 and each of the next five years. Fluellen must have died poor in 1595 without leaving his widow a sufficient bequest since she was admitted to the almshouse about ten years later. Writs of arrest were issued against Bardell in 1588 and again in 1592, and his debts are recorded in a Chancery suit of 1591 against Adrian and Richard Quiney, William Baynton (his brother-in-law), William Court, Abraham Sturley and Henry Walker. He was Charles Baynton's business partner, who, being unable to pay a bond of £600 to

⁸³ Mutschmann and Wentersdorf, p. 62; Milward, *Shakespeare's Religious Background*, p. 19; Ian Wilson, *Shakespeare: The Evidence* (New York: St. Martin's, 1993), p. 53; Brownlow, p. 187. See appendix A for the anti-Catholic act that prohibited this practice.

⁸⁴ Quoted in Schoenbaum, *Documentary Life*, p. 39.

Stephen Soame, alderman of London, was arrested — but escaped, and fled to Ireland where he was said to have died. Soame sued in the Common Pleas, and Bardell was arrested for the debt. Eccles reasonably comments: ‘it is no wonder he kept away from church for fear of arrest’ after he was released. He was sent to prison again in December 1592 and produced a *certiorari*. He must have died poor since his widow, like Fluellen’s, lived ‘in the Roomes over the Almesfolkes’.⁸⁵

Sheriffs’ officers often made arrests on Sunday when most people could be found at church.⁸⁶ In 1592 commissioners for Tachbrook reported that one Thomas Olney the elder ‘cometh not to the church for feare of Processes, but he receveth the communion yearely’. The rector of Week St. Mary in Cornwall did not come to church because he ‘keepeth his house for debt’.⁸⁷ There is, therefore, good reason to believe that the nine Stratford men’s fear of process did in fact cause their absence from church. Sams claims that ‘in those days Catholicism and poverty [. . .] were often cause and effect’ because recusants were fined, and that ‘any recusant was liable to debt and arrest, by definition’. He suggests that ‘any signs of poverty or isolation may well imply that he [John] was paying for his faith in every sense’.⁸⁸ However, there is neither any record that John was ever fined for recusancy nor any other documentary evidence that leads to the conclusion that his debt was actually the result of a recusancy fine.

Mutschmann and Wentersdorf add that John ‘neither sued nor was sued in the Court of Record between October 1591 and January 1593’, although they admit that ‘execution had been granted against him in April–May 1592 in respect of an old

⁸⁵ Eccles, p. 34.

⁸⁶ Eccles, p. 33; Schoenbaum, *Documentary Life*, p. 39.

⁸⁷ Quoted in Eccles, p. 33.

⁸⁸ *The Real Shakespeare*, pp. 14 and 26.

debt'.⁸⁹ They do not clarify the source for this 'execution', which was first discovered by Leslie Hotson.⁹⁰ Among the docket rolls of the Court of Common Pleas for the Hilary term of 1588–9 is an entry of the suit between John Shakespeare and one William Burbage (C.P. 40/1697, mem. 327, Hilary 31 Eliz.). It seems that the lawsuit began over John's lease of a house in Stratford to Burbage 'for an illegible number of pounds (probably seven) and 10 shillings [. . .] for divers years'.⁹¹ To settle the matter they submitted to the arbitration of a certain '—arnshurst' (probably Nicholas Barnhurst), William Badger and John Lytton.⁹² The arbitrators determined that John should pay Burbage £7 on Michaelmas Day 1582 at the Maiden Head in Stratford between one and four in the afternoon. Although Burbage frequently demanded the money, John did not pay. Burbage sued for the debt, claiming that 'he has suffered injury and has lost to the value of ten pounds'. John's attorney, William Foster, reported that he had 'not been informed by the same John his client of any answer to give for the same John to the abovesaid William in the action aforesaid And nothing else does he say so that the same John remains without defence against the abovesaid William'. It was therefore adjudged that Burbage 'shall recover from the abovesaid John his aforesaid debt' and that 'his damages on account of the withholding of that debt are here by the assent of the Court awarded to the same William at thirty-six shillings'.⁹³

Among the docket rolls for Easter term, 1592 is a report that execution of the judgment remained to be done (C.P. 40/1497, mem. 1122, Easter 34 Eliz.).⁹⁴ John was summoned before the justices of the Common Pleas in April or May 1592. As he

⁸⁹ Mutschmann and Wentersdorf, p. 62.

⁹⁰ *Shakespeare's Sonnets Dated* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1949), p. 237. For the entire text, see *Minutes and Accounts*, IV: 1586–1592, pp. 57–8 (in Latin) and 59–60 (English translation).

⁹¹ Hotson, *Shakespeare's Sonnets Dated*, p. 237.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 237; *Minutes and Accounts*, IV: 1586–1592, pp. 58 (in Latin) and 59 (English translation).

⁹³ Translated in *Minutes and Accounts*, IV: 1586–1592, pp. 59–60 (p. 60).

⁹⁴ *Minutes and Accounts*, IV: 1586–1592, pp. 150 (in Latin) and 151 (English translation).

failed to appear after his three days of grace, the justices therefore ordered that Burbage ‘shall have execution against the abovesaid John for the debt and damages aforesaid through John’s own default’.⁹⁵ The first recusant return by the commissioners of Warwickshire, as we have seen, was made at the end of March, and the second on 25 September 1592. The second judgment against John was ordered between these months. Although the German scholars speculate that John must have paid the debt ‘because we know that he retained his freedom’,⁹⁶ Schoenbaum suggests otherwise — John never paid.⁹⁷

John, as we have already seen, was in fact in financial difficulty. Whether Catholic or not, John, then, had good reason to fear being arrested at the parish church on a Sunday. In face of the documentary evidence we have examined, the nine Stratford men’s fear of process may well have been genuine, and the commissioners’ note may suggest that they were not able to identify the nine Stratford men’s religious beliefs as the actual cause of their absence from church. It was probably for this reason that they were not convicted, and their names thus do not appear on the recusant roll of 1592–3 (or that of 1593–4). From the recusant returns alone, therefore, we cannot identify John’s religious view.

III. John Shakespeare’s ‘Spiritual Testament’

In April 1757 the then owner of Shakespeare’s house in Henley Street, Thomas Hart, the fifth descendant of the dramatist’s sister Joan Hart, employed builders to retiling the roof. On the 29th, when Joseph Moseley, a master bricklayer, was retiling the western part of the roof, he is said to have discovered between the rafters and the tiling of the roof a manuscript booklet of six leaves stitched together — now known as John

⁹⁵ Translated in *Minutes and Accounts*, IV: 1586–1592, p. 151.

⁹⁶ Mutschmann and Wentersdorf, p. 62.

⁹⁷ *Documentary Life*, p. 29.

Shakespeare's 'spiritual testament'. In this testament 'John Shakspear' makes a Catholic profession of faith in fourteen articles. Moseley, with the knowledge of Hart, later gave the booklet to Payton of Shottery, a Stratford alderman.

In 1784 John Jordan, 'the ubiquitous cicerone of the Shakespeare shrine', was allowed to copy the booklet, the first leaf of which was said to be missing by this time.⁹⁸ He tried to publish his transcript in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, informing its editor that the original 'is wrote [*sic*] in a fair and legible hand, and the spelling exactly as I have sent it [to] you'.⁹⁹ The editor of the magazine rejected it as spurious.

Meanwhile, Edmond Malone had heard of the discovery and through the inquiries of James Davenport, vicar of Stratford, traced it to Payton. Payton willingly allowed Davenport to send the manuscript booklet on to Malone. By this time, the first leaf was missing. Having perused the relic, Malone concluded:

the handwriting is undoubtedly not so ancient as that usually written about the year 1600, but I have now before me a manuscript written by Alleyn the player at various times between 1599 and 1614, and another by Forde, the dramatic poet, in 1606, in nearly the same handwriting as that of the manuscript in question.¹⁰⁰

He was 'perfectly satisfied' of its genuineness, and published it in the 'Historical Account of the English Stage' in his 1790 edition of *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare* (I.ii).

Before the volume was printed off, Davenport forwarded to Malone a quarto notebook belonging to Jordan which contained a transcript of the complete booklet. Malone, puzzled by the sudden resurfacing of the missing first leaf, questioned Jordan. Malone was more puzzled by Jordan's reply, for he found the details inconsistent. On 19 March 1790 Jordan informed Malone that the manuscript booklet had been given to him in June 1785 — the year after he had offered his transcript to

⁹⁸ *Documentary Life*, p. 41.

⁹⁹ Letter dated 14 June 1785, quoted in *Outlines*, II, p. 399.

¹⁰⁰ Edmond Malone, ed., *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare*, 10 vols (London: H. Baldwin for J. Rivington and Sons, 1790), I.ii, pp. 161–2.

The Gentleman's Magazine for publication. In his letter to the editor of the magazine, Jordan remarked that he had obtained the manuscript six days previously, but to Malone he claimed that he had waited for some time before sending his transcript off. He also informed Malone that he had asked Moseley to look for the missing leaf and that Moseley did not show the manuscript to Hart, the then owner of the house, though Hart had previously told Malone that he remembered its discovery.¹⁰¹ Malone nevertheless printed the first leaf in the 'Emendations and Additions' section in his 1790 edition.

In 1796, however, Malone announced that 'I certainly was mistaken; for I have since obtained documents that clearly prove it could not have been the composition of any one of our poet's family'. Although he added that his proof would be 'fully shewn in Life', his new biographical study was not published during his lifetime.¹⁰² James Boswell, who published the *Life of William Shakespeare* on the basis of Malone's notes, could not find among Malone's papers the evidence to which Malone had alluded.

This communication between Malone and Jordan and the former's final opinion of the manuscript in question are completely disregarded in biographies by Anthony Holden and Eric Sams. Sams is confident that it was the dramatist's father who 'left a Catholic confession of faith'.¹⁰³ Herbert Thurston claims that 'the circumstances of its discovery give no ground for suspicion', but he ignores Malone's scepticism touching the circumstances of the discovery expressed in his letter to Jordan.¹⁰⁴ Sidney Lee, on the other hand, claims that the manuscript was Jordan's forgery: 'The earliest forger to obtain notoriety was John Jordan (1746–1809), a

¹⁰¹ Edmond Malone, *An Inquiry into the Authenticity of Certain Miscellaneous Papers and Legal Instruments, Published Dec. 24, M DCC XCV, and Attributed to Shakespeare, Queen Elizabeth, and Henry, Earl of Southampton* (London: H. Baldwin, 1796), pp. 198–9.

¹⁰² *An Inquiry into the Authenticity of Certain Miscellaneous Papers and Legal Instruments*, pp. 198–9.

¹⁰³ Sams, p. 12.

¹⁰⁴ 'The Religion of Shakespere [sic]', *The Month* (May 1882), 1–19 (p. 5).

resident at Stratford-on-Avon, whose most important achievement was the forgery of the will of Shakespeare's father'.¹⁰⁵ Thurston doubts 'that the discovery was simply an invention of Jordan's', for he believes that 'Jordan was too familiar with sixteenth century registers not to know that Elizabethan scribes allowed themselves an extraordinary latitude in this respect, especially in the use of y's and ie's (e.g. mercy, mercie or mercye, thine or thyne, &c.)'.¹⁰⁶ Chambers thinks that there is no reason to believe that Jordan was 'capable of any fabrication which required scholarly knowledge' and that it is most unlikely that Jordan or anyone else in eighteenth-century Stratford would reproduce 'the language of what certainly reads like the devotional exercise of a professing Catholic'.¹⁰⁷ E. A. J. Honigmann repeats Chambers's belief.¹⁰⁸

In 1923 Thurston reported that he had found in the British Museum a Spanish version of the spiritual testament printed in Mexico City in 1661. The title-page reads:

Testamento o Ultima Voluntad del Alma hecho en Salud para assegurar el christiano de las tentaciones del Demonio, en la hora de la muerte; Ordenado por San Carlos Borromeo, Cardenal del Santa Praxedis, y Arçobispo de Milan
[The Testament or Last Will of the Soul, made in health for the Christian to secure himself from the temptations of the devil at the hour of death, drawn up by St. Charles Borromeo, Cardinal of St. Praxedis and Archbishop of Milan].¹⁰⁹

This printed Spanish text contains blank spaces left for the testator to insert his or her name — we are not told exactly how many and where the blanks occur — but it is significant that in the Spanish formula the blank spaces do not recur at the beginning of each article (while in the Birthplace manuscript the testator's name is repeated in every article). He also found in the British Museum a manuscript version of the Mexican text made before 1690 — not 1590 — by a professional scribe for the use of

¹⁰⁵ *A Life of William Shakespeare* (London; New York: Macmillan, 1898), pp. 365–6.

¹⁰⁶ 'The Spiritual Testament of John Shakespeare', *The Month* (November 1911), 487–502 (pp. 499–500).

¹⁰⁷ Chambers, *Facts and Problems*, II, pp. 380–2 (pp. 380 and 382).

¹⁰⁸ Honigmann, *Shakespeare: The 'Lost Years'*, p. 116.

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in Thurston, 'A Controverted Shakespeare Document', *The Dublin Review* 173: 347 (1923), 161–76 (p. 165).

one Maria Tresa de Cardenas. The testator's name is only signed at the end. In these specimens, as in one other text printed in the Romansh dialect at Barraduz in Switzerland in 1741, Borromeo is named as the author of the formula.¹¹⁰

Yet Thurston was not too sure of the authorship of these texts, for Thurston had also found out that in the *Life of St. Alessandro Sauli*, by Father Bianchi, the Italian version of the same formula has been printed as an appendix, claiming Sauli's authorship. Nevertheless, Thurston argued that there was no reason why the formula should not have been familiar to Borromeo by 1570 because he seems to have met Alessandro Sauli for the first time in 1557 and to have placed himself under his spiritual guidance in 1568. Thurston speculated that Campion and Parsons along with other Jesuit missionaries learned of the formula when Borromeo entertained the missionaries at Milan in 1580 before they travelled to England, and that 'an English rendering of the spiritual testament' was circulating among Catholics in Warwickshire 'some twenty years before the death of John Shakespeare' (September 1601). He suggested that 'the scribe who officiated in such a case might well have been a priest, a fact which would also help to explain the unusual correctness of the orthography'.¹¹¹

Mutschmann and Wentersdorf claim that the Borromeo testament was 'reproduced either by handwriting or printing, so that the testator only had to sign his name in the appropriate places in the document'.¹¹² But their account is selective and misleading. The German biographers refer only to the portion of Thurston's account that allows them to Catholicise the dramatist's father, and hide the essential differences between the five-leaf manuscript and the Spanish and Italian texts that would weaken their own account.

¹¹⁰ 'A Controverted Shakespeare Document', 166–7.

¹¹¹ 'A Controverted Shakespeare Document', 168.

¹¹² p. 57.

Thurston, while insisting on the authenticity of the other five leaves, believed that Jordan's transcript of the missing first leaf sent to Malone was 'a clumsy invention' of Jordan's because his transcript differs significantly from the Spanish and the Italian texts.¹¹³ He argued:

On the forgery theory we have to suppose that he had found an English translation of this distinctively Catholic testament, that he copied it out again in archaic writing, inserting in twelve places the name of John Shakespeare, and that he did his work so skilfully that Malone, the prime detector of forgeries, though he had the five little leaves in his hands for months and wrote many times to make inquiries about them at Stratford, was completely imposed upon. [. . .] We have, in fact, not a scrap of evidence to show that Jordan possessed any exceptional skill in penmanship.¹¹⁴

In Thurston's view, the rest of the manuscript, on the other hand, was genuine. He concluded that it was 'eminently probable' that the story of its discovery by Moseley was 'the simple truth'.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ 'A Controverted Shakespeare Document', 171–3 (pp. 171 and 173).

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 173–4.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 174. Thurston also speculated that the testament might have been originally written for the dramatist's sister, Joan Shakespeare. In article X testators were to insert a saint of their choice. The testator of the birthplace relic inserted St. Winifride, who according to Thurston, is often a women's saint. Thurston thus suggested that the testament was originally copied for a woman. Since the name Joan was written in different ways, and Thurston himself remembered seeing it written 'John', he conjectured that the testament was originally transcribed for Joan Shakespeare in her girlhood and that John's name had come to replace his daughter's. He brought his speculation one step further by adding a rather peculiar speculation that about 1660 one of the Harts might have found the original testament in an old drawer and might have copied it 'just for the curiosity of the contents', and that the substitution of John for Joan might be 'a simple blunder of the copyist' ('A Controverted Shakespeare Document', 174–5). But we are not told why it was that the testament should have been placed between the rafters and the tiling. John Henry De Groot believes that there was no reason that any of the Hart family would have needed to hide the document after 1660. Joan, who was born in 1569 would have been only eleven or twelve years old when the Jesuit missionaries arrived. De Groot asserts that Joan's age would have been 'a rather tender age at which to be signing last wills and testaments'. He claims that the testator does not have to be a female, for 'men did have female saints for patrons', and argues that 'a single instance will suffice to prove the point'. But a question remains: how common was it for men to have female saints? De Groot suggests further that a priest may have recommended that John should insert St. Winifride. The Episcopal head of the Jesuit mission was Thomas Goldwell, bishop of St. Asaph. The town of St Asaph is about ten miles from Holywell. Goldwell revived the pilgrimages to the well of St. Winifride and obtained from Pope Martin V a renewal of the indulgences for pilgrims to the shrine. Goldwell fell ill at Rheims on his way to England and returned to Rome. De Groot thus speculates that the virtues of St. Winifride and of Holywell may have been recommended by Goldwell before the missionaries left Rheims. It would be 'quite natural', claims de Groot, that a member of the missionary body should recommend St. Winifride as a patron saint to John 'who may have shown hesitancy in the choice of a patron'. Needless to say, this account rests heavily on speculation. (De Groot, pp.100–3) For the biography of Goldwell, see *The Catholic Encyclopedia* < <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen> >, s.v. 'Goldwell, Thomas'.

In 1967 James G. McManaway of the Folger Shakespeare Library reported that the Library had recently purchased an English version of the Borromeo testament contained in a volume entitled *The Contract and Testament of the Sovle*. It was published in 1638 probably on the continent. The relevant section is headed 'The Testament of the Sovle. Made by S. Charles Borro. Card. & Arch. of Millan' (pp. 42–6). This, as McManaway points out, is 'the earliest surviving text' of the testament 'as well as the only authentic English text'. McManaway has proved that Jordan's transcript of the missing first leaf was a forgery but argued that the five leaves sent to Malone 'must have been genuine'.¹¹⁶ Since then, an earlier English edition (published in 1635) has been found at St. Mary's Seminary, Oscott. This copy does not identify the author of the testament.

Ian Wilson, like McManaway, asserts that the five leaves sent to Malone must have been genuine,¹¹⁷ but we should not neglect differences between the five-leaf manuscript and the English texts in the Folger Shakespeare Library and in St. Mary's seminary, Oscott. In the Birthplace manuscript, John's name is inserted at the beginning of each article. In the printed English versions of the Borromeo testament, blank spaces do not occur at the beginning of every article. (Nor do they appear in the Spanish and Italian texts that Thurston found.) Among these insertions of John's name, Robert Bearman finds a 'syntactical error' in article VIII: 'Item, / John Shakespear, by virtue of this present testament, / I do pardon all the injuries and offences that any one hath ever done unto me [. . .]'¹¹⁸ Bearman suggests that a forger inserted John's name into each clause and 'I John Shakespear' at a wrong place in article VIII.

¹¹⁶ 'John Shakespeare's "Spiritual Testament"', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 18 (1967), 197–205 (pp. 199 and 205).

¹¹⁷ Wilson, *Shakespeare: The Evidence*, pp. 46–7.

¹¹⁸ Bearman, 'John Shakespeare's "Spiritual Testament": A Reappraisal' (forthcoming), p. 27 (I am grateful to Dr. Bearman for sending me a copy of this essay); Malone, 'An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the English Stage', p. 165 (emphasis added).

Sams argues that 'the existence' of 'The Testament of the Sovle' serves 'to validate the version given by Malone' and that this version transcribed the Birthplace document.¹¹⁹ It appears that Sams has not examined the Folger text, and Wilson's description 'essentially word-for-word correspondence' is an exaggeration.¹²⁰ A close analysis of Malone's transcript of the Birthplace manuscript and McManaway's transcript of the Folger text discloses over twenty differences (excluding spelling, capitalization and punctuation) between them. The 1635 text is not truly identical to Malone's version, either. Furthermore, there are differences even between Malone's text and Jordan's transcript, which Sams and Wilson completely neglect. I would like to point out some of the crucial differences among these four texts. Let us examine, for example, article IV (crucial differences are indicated in Italics):

Malone: [. . .] beseeching his divine majesty that he will be pleased to anoynt *my* senses both internall and externall with the sacred oyle of his infinite mercy, and to pardon me all my sins *committed* by seeing, speaking, *feeling*, smelling, hearing, *touching*, or *by any other way whatsoever*.¹²¹

Jordan: [. . .] beseeching his Divine Majesty that he will be pleased to anoint *my* senses both internall and externall with the sacred oyle of his infinite mercy, and to pardon me all my sins, by seeing, speaking, *feeling*, smelling, hearing, *touching*, or *by any other way whatsoever*.¹²²

The Sovles Testament (1635): [. . .] beseeching his diuine Maiesty that he will be pleased to anoynt *any* Senses both internall & externall, with the Sacred Oyle of his infinite Mercy, and to pardon me all my sins committed by Seeing, Speaking, *Tasting*, Smelling, Hearing, *Touching*, or *by any other way whatsoever*.¹²³

'The Testament of the Sovle' (1638): [. . .] beseeching his diuine Majesty that he will be pleased to anoint *my* Senses both internall and external with the sacred oile of his infinite Mercy, & to pardon me al my sins committed by Seeing, Speaking, *Touching*, Smelling, Hearing, or any other way whatsoever.¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ P. 32.

¹²⁰ *Shakespeare: The Evidence*, pp. 46–7.

¹²¹ Malone, 'An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the English Stage', p. 163.

¹²² *Original Memoirs and Historical Accounts of the Families of Shakespeare and Hart*, ed. by J. O. Halliwell (London: Thomas Richards, 1865), p. 73. The word 'committed' does not appear in Jordan's transcript.

¹²³ *The Sovles Testament*, in Gerónimo Gracián, *The Bvrning Lampe* (1635), pp. 129–56 (p. 136). A facsimile of the text is in *English Recusant Literature 1558–1640 Series 140* (Menston: Scolar, 1973).

¹²⁴ McManaway, 201 (transcript); *Documentary Life*, p. 44 (facsimile).

A clear difference occurs at the end of the article: the five-leaf relic lists six senses, while 'The Testament of the Sovle' lists only five (lacking 'feeling').

In the following article:

Malone: [. . .] yet will I steadfastly hope in gods infinite mercy, knowing that he hath heretofore pardoned many *as great sinners as my self*, whereof I have good warrant *sealed* with his sacred mouth, in holy writ, whereby he pronounceth that he is not come to call the just, but sinners.¹²⁵

Jordan: [. . .] yet will I steadfastly hope in God's infinite mercy, knowinge that he hathe heretofore pardoned many *as many and greate sinners as myself*, whereof I have good warrant *dealed* with his [sacred?] mouth, in Holy Writ, whereby he pronounceth that he is not come to call the just but sinners.¹²⁶

The Sovles Testament: [. . .] yet will I stedfastly hope in Gods infinit Mercy, knowing that he hath hertofore pardoned many *as great sinners as my selfe*, wherof I haue good warrant, *sealed* with his sacred mouth, in holy writ, whereby he pronounceth, that he is not come to call the iust, but sinners.¹²⁷

'The Testament of the Sovle': [. . .] yet wil I steadfastly in Gods infinit Mercy, knowing that he hath heretofore pardoned many *grievous* sinners, wherof I haue good warrant, sealed with his sacred mouth, in holy Writ, wherby he pronounceth, that he is not come to call the iust, but sinners.¹²⁸

Article VII ends with:

Malone: [. . .] beseeching his divine clemency that he will not forsake me in that grievous and paignefull *agony*.¹²⁹

Jordan: [. . .] beseeching his divine clemency that he will not forsake me in that grievous and paignefull *agony*.¹³⁰

The Sovles Testament: [. . .] beseeching his diuine Clemency, that he will not forsake me in that grievous and panefull *Agony*.¹³¹

'The Testament of the Sovle': [. . .] beseeching his diuine Clemency, that he will not forsake me in that grievous & Painfull *Conflict*.¹³²

Similarly, article XIII ends with different similes:

Malone: [. . .] direfull iron of the launce, which, like *a charge in a censure*, formes so sweet and pleasant a monument within the sacred breast of my lord and

¹²⁵ Malone, 'An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the English Stage', p. 163.

¹²⁶ *Original Memoirs and Historical Accounts*, p. 73. It is not clear which transcript Halliwell is referring to when notes that "[s]acred" introduced here'.

¹²⁷ *The Sovles Testament*, p. 137.

¹²⁸ McManaway, 201; *Documentary Life*, p. 44.

¹²⁹ Malone, 'An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the English Stage', p. 164.

¹³⁰ *Original Memoirs and Historical Accounts*, p. 74.

¹³¹ *The Sovles Testament*, p. 140.

¹³² McManaway, 202; Schoenbaum, *Documentary Life*, p. 45.

saviour.¹³³

Jordan: [. . .] direfull iron of the launce, which like *a sharpe cutting razor* formed so sweet and pleasant a monument within the sacred breast of my Lord and Saviour.¹³⁴

The Sovles Testament: [. . .] Direfull Iron of the launce which like *a sharpe cutting rasour*, formed so sweet & pleasant a monument, within the sacred breast of my Lord and Sauour.¹³⁵

‘The Testament of the Sovle’: [. . .] direfull Iron of the Launce, which like *a sharpe cutting Rasour* formed so sweet and pleasant a monument, within the sacred breast of my Lord & Sauour.¹³⁶

After article XIV *The Sovles Testament* reads ‘Heere let him who hath made these Protestations aboue sayd, write his Name and Quality, as folowethe’. ‘The Testament of the Sovle’ has a similar, but not exactly the same, phrase: ‘Heere let him, write his Name and Quality, as followeth’. But none of these appears in the five-leaf manuscript. The testament ends with significant differences:

Malone: Pater noster Ave maria, Credo. jesu, son of David, have mercy on me. Amen.¹³⁷

Jordan: Pater noster, Ave maria, credo Jesu / son of David, have mercy on me Amen.¹³⁸

The Sovles Testament: Having made the foresayd protestations & subscription, he may say deuoutly the ensuing prayers, Pater noster, Aue Maria, Credo. Iesu sonne of Daud, haue mercy on me. Amen. [‘The Prayer’ follows in the next three pages.]¹³⁹

‘The Testament of the Sovle’: Having made this protestation, let him say deuoutly, Pater, A[u]e. Creed. / FINIS.¹⁴⁰

The above examination of the four texts reveals that although most — but not all — phrases in the five-leaf manuscript have their counter parts in the other two texts, they cannot have been based on the same English translation of the testament. In other

¹³³ Malone, ‘An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the English Stage’, p. 165.

¹³⁴ *Original Memoirs and Historical Accounts*, p. 77.

¹³⁵ *The Sovles Testament*, pp. 146–7.

¹³⁶ McManaway, 203; Schoenbaum, *Documentary Life*, p. 45.

¹³⁷ Malone, ‘An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the English Stage’, p. 166.

¹³⁸ *Original Memoirs and Historical Accounts*, p. 78.

¹³⁹ *The Sovles Testament*, pp. 149–50.

¹⁴⁰ McManaway, 204; *Documentary Life*, p. 45.

words, the five-leaf manuscript must have been based on an English text — whether manuscript or printed — that is not known to be extant.

John Henry de Groot believes that there is no reason to doubt the ascription of authorship to Borromeo. In 1576–8 plague struck Milan and killed approximately 17,000 people.¹⁴¹ De Groot speculates that Borromeo formulated the testament during these years. On the basis of this assumption, he speculates further:

The document was taken [. . .], in all probability, by the Jesuit missionaries who, under the leadership of [. . .] Edmund Campion and [. . .] Robert Persons, reached England in 1580. The missionary party, for the moment consisting of ten priests and two laymen, on its way from Rome to England, stopped at Milan early in May 1580.¹⁴²

De Groot speculates that the missionaries may have produced further copies so that a testator would only have to sign his or her name or mark in the appropriate blank spaces in the document. In Catholic households the missionaries held secret conferences, confession, and mass. On these occasions, de Groot suggested, the Jesuits may have secured the signatures of Catholics on the testaments. Campion and Parsons separately passed through the Midlands. De Groot assumes that they may have distributed copies of the Borromeo testament in Warwickshire while staying in the households of Catholic gentlemen, and that John received one of these copies.

One of these Catholic gentlemen is said to have been Sir William Catesby in Lapworth, about twelve miles from Stratford.¹⁴³ The Privy Council believed that Catesby had harboured Campion, and for his hospitality, he was arrested and imprisoned in the Fleet.¹⁴⁴ It has been speculated further that John Shakespeare

¹⁴¹ Margaret Yeo, *Prince of Pastors: St. Charles Borromeo* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1938), pp. 193–205.

¹⁴² *The Shakespeares and 'The Old Faith'* (New York: King's Crown, 1946), p. 85.

¹⁴³ Sir William Catesby was the father of Gunpowder Plotter, Robert Catesby (then eight years old).

¹⁴⁴ *Acts of the Privy Council*, XIII: 1581–1582, pp. 163–4 and 176. See also *Documentary Life*, p. 46; *Compact Documentary Life*, p. 51; Milward, *Shakespeare's Religious Background*, p. 21; Sams, pp. 32–3; Ian Wilson, *Shakespeare: The Evidence*, p. 48.

received his copy of the testament from Campion, presumably at Catesby's house in 1580.¹⁴⁵

De Groot's theory has been accepted by most biographers,¹⁴⁶ and Honan even claims that 'Jesuit missionaries in England were making use of [the testament] by 1581'.¹⁴⁷ Sams not only narrates de Groot's account as fact but also claims that the Borromeo testament 'was regarded by Elizabeth's government as the illicit and defiant profession of a forbidden faith'.¹⁴⁸ There is no evidence to support Sams's claim. Here, not only is this speculation presented as fact, but it also promotes the Catholicisation of Shakespeare's father.

Furthermore, de Groot's generally accepted assumption contains weaknesses, which put the authenticity of the birthplace manuscript into question. Firstly, the authorship of the testament has not been firmly established. As Thurston points out, in the *Life of St. Alessandro Sauli*, an Italian text of the same testament is printed as an appendix.¹⁴⁹ The text, Thurston says, indicates Sauli's authorship. According to de Groot, Borromeo had made 'a general confession of his whole life' to the 'learned and saintly Barnabite friar, Alessandro Sauli'.¹⁵⁰ De Groot speculates accordingly that '[t]he relationship between the two men was intimate enough to warrant the assumption that the confession in the appendix of Sauli's *Life* is not his own, but that of his venerable superior'.¹⁵¹ The 1635 English edition, as I have pointed out already, does not identify the author at all. Furthermore, there is no documentary evidence to

¹⁴⁵ Milward, p. 21; Sams, pp. 32–3; Wilson, *Shakespeare: The Evidence*, p. 48.

¹⁴⁶ Mutschmann and Wentersdorf, p. 56; *Documentary Life*, p. 43; *Compact Documentary Life*, p. 50; Ian Wilson, *Shakespeare: The Evidence*, pp. 47–8; Richard Wilson, 'Shakespeare and the Jesuits', *TLS*, 19 December 1997, pp. 11–3 (p. 11); Anthony Holden, 'William the Younger', <<http://www.guardianunlimited.co.uk>> (no pagination). Eamon Duffy also accepted the theory ('Was Shakespeare a Catholic?', pp. 536–7).

¹⁴⁷ *Shakespeare*, p. 39.

¹⁴⁸ P. 32.

¹⁴⁹ 'A Controverted Shakespeare Document', 168.

¹⁵⁰ Quoted in de Groot, p. 85.

¹⁵¹ P. 85.

support de Groot's assumption that it was during the plague years (1576–8) that Borromeo formulated the testament. If the Borromeo testament was used as widely and popularly as has been claimed, it is strange that the *Life of St. Alessandro Sauli* and the 1635 English edition do not identify the author of the testament as Borromeo, and that it was not until the mid-seventeenth century that these English texts were printed.

Borromeo died in 1584 and was canonized in 1610. In the following year John Heigham published *Certaine Advertisements teaching men how to lead a Christian Life, written in Italian by the Right Honorable Cardinal Borromeus and now first translated into English*. In the preface Heigham appears to have felt 'the need to explain who Borromeo was'. He also spoke of the canonisation in 1610, 'the result of a campaign launched in 1603 by Borromeo's cousin and successor as archbishop of Milan, Federico Borromeo', indicating that it was this event that had prompted the English translation of his work. Although 'copies survive of most of the books [. . .] which were reported as being smuggled into England in the 1580s, there has yet to be discovered even a reference to Borromeo's [s]piritual [t]estament being one of them, despite its alleged popularity'.¹⁵²

Secondly, there is no conclusive evidence to support de Groot's assumption that Campion and Parsons smuggled the testament into England or that English manuscript versions of the testament were circulating among Catholics in England in the early 1580s, just as on the continent. Quoting from Parsons and Campion to describe 'the missionary technique of the Jesuits in England', de Groot comments that '[t]he use of such a formula as a spiritual last will and testament by the Jesuits missionaries and by other priests as they came in contact with the Jesuits would be occasional'. But there is no evidence in the quotations from Parsons and Campion to

¹⁵² Bearman, 'John Shakespeare's "Spiritual Testament": A Reappraisal', pp. 21 and 24.

support de Groot's conjecture; the Jesuits, so far as we can tell from the quotations, only performed ordinary liturgical Catholic ceremonies in Catholic households.¹⁵³ Referring to another phrase in Campion's letter — 'Very many even at this present are being restored to the Church, new soldiers *give up their names* while the veterans offer their blood; by which holy hosts and oblations God will be pleased, and we shall, no question, by Him soon overcome'¹⁵⁴ — de Groot suggests that the phrase in italics 'hints at the signing of a formula'.¹⁵⁵ His reading has two weaknesses. Firstly, it is unclear whom Campion meant by 'new soldiers', although 'soldiers' can be a figure of speech 'with reference to spiritual service'.¹⁵⁶ They may have been young Catholics, whether missionaries, clergy or laity. Secondly, 'giving up their names' may have meant that the 'new soldiers' suffered imprisonment and gave up their future. My interpretation of the phrase seems to fit better for two reasons. Firstly, earlier in the same letter, Campion mentions that Catholic martyrs in England include both the old and the young:

[. . .] it is now come to pass that for a few apostates and cobblers of theirs burnt, we have bishops, lords, knights, the old nobility, the patterns of learning, piety, and prudence, the flower of the youth, noble matrons, and of the inferior sort innumerable, either martyred at once, or by consuming imprisonment dying daily.¹⁵⁷

In fact, some of the missionaries sent to England with Campion and Parsons were under thirty years old.¹⁵⁸ Secondly, my reading casts light on the two groups of people mentioned in Campion's letter: 'new soldiers giving up their names' and 'the veterans' who 'offer their blood', that is, suffer from the English government's persecution.

¹⁵³ Ibid., pp. 86–7.

¹⁵⁴ Quoted in de Groot, p. 87 (de Groot's emphasis).

¹⁵⁵ De Groot, p. 87.

¹⁵⁶ OED, s.v. 'soldier', 2.

¹⁵⁷ Quoted in *Lives of the English Martyrs, Declared Blessed by Pope Leo VIII in 1886 and 1895*, ed. by Dom Bede Camm, 2 vols, 1st Series (London and New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1914), II: Martyrs under Queen Elizabeth, p. 326.

¹⁵⁸ See J. H. Pollen, 'The Journey of Blessed Edmund Campion from Rome to England', *The Month* (September 1897), 243–64.

On the basis of de Groot's assumption, it has been speculated further that John Shakespeare received a copy of the Borromeo testament from Campion at Catesby's house. Catesby was arrested on the basis of Campion's confession — Catesby himself never confessed that he had sheltered Campion — but there is not a single mention of the spiritual testament in the Privy Council's reports.

What de Groot considers '[a] better bit of evidence' for Jesuits' use of the testament is equally questionable. In 1581 William Allen wrote to Alfonso (or Alphonso) Agazzari, rector of the English seminary at Rome, that Parsons wanted to obtain 'three or four thousand or more of the Testaments, for many persons desire to have them'.¹⁵⁹ De Groot regards 'the Testaments' as the Borromeo testament. In a forthcoming article, however, Robert Bearman convincingly challenges de Groot's theory by presenting two more plausible interpretations of Allen's reference to the testaments in contrast to the claim of an 'unrecorded (at least by this date) English translation'.¹⁶⁰ I would like to summarise Bearman's argument and add some more information.

Bearman's first theory is linked to the John Nichols controversy in 1581. In 1577 Nichols, then curate of Withycombe, Somerset, left the church and travelled to Antwerp. In May 1579 he publicly abjured Protestantism and received absolution, which was published in the same month. Shortly after his return to England in 1580, he was arrested at Islington and committed by Sir Francis Walsingham and the bishop of London to the Tower as a suspected Catholic. On 5 February 1581 he made a formal recantation before Sir Owen Hopton, lieutenant of the Tower.¹⁶¹ The recantation was printed on 14 February, in which he professed to have been 'the Popes Scoler in the [newly founded] English Seminarie or Colledge at Rome' and desired 'to

¹⁵⁹ Quoted in de Groot, p. 87.

¹⁶⁰ 'John Shakespeare's "Spiritual Testament": A Reappraisal', p. 15.

¹⁶¹ *DNB*, s.v. 'Nichols, John'.

be reconciled as a member into the true Church of Christ in England'.¹⁶² Soon after a pamphlet *A Discouerie of I. Nicols, minister, misreported a Iesuite, latelye recanted in the Tower of London* was published anonymously, accusing Nichols of making up a story about his career in Rome (see illus. 11).¹⁶³ This pamphlet is generally attributed to Parsons.¹⁶⁴ In April Nichols replied to this attack in his *Oration and sermon made at Rome by commaundment of the foure cardinalles, and the Dominican inquisitour, vpon paine of death*. The title-page announced that it was written 'By Iohn Nichols, latelie the Popes scholler', and that the book contained 'sermon and oration [. . .] presented before the Pope and his cardinalles in his consistorie, the xxvii day of Maie 1578 and remaineth there registred; now by him brought into the English tongue, for the great comfort and commoditie of all faithfull Christians'.¹⁶⁵ In the book he also revealed his next project to disclose the immorality of Jesuits. Later in the same year he published *Iohn Niccols pilgrimage* which, 'displaied the liues of the proude popes, ambitious cardinals, lecherous bishops, fat bellied monkes, and hypocriticall Iesuites'.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² *A declaration of the recantation of Iohn Nichols (for the space almost of two yeeres the Popes Scholer in the English Seminarie or Colledge at Rome) which desireth to be reconciled, and received as a member into the true Church of Christ in England* (1581), STC 18533. See DNB, s.v., 'Nichols, John'; Bearman, 'John Shakespeare's "Spiritual Testament": A Reappraisal', p. 15; Peter Milward, *Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age: A Survey of Printed Sources* (London: Scolar, 1978), p. 52.

¹⁶³ STC 19402. See Bearman, 'John Shakespeare's "Spiritual Testament": A Reappraisal', p. 15; Milward, *Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age*, p. 53.

¹⁶⁴ EEBO, citation details for *A Discouerie*.

¹⁶⁵ STC 18536a. See Bearman, 'John Shakespeare's "Spiritual Testament": A Reappraisal', p. 15; Milward, *Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age*, pp. 52–3. Milward suggests that the *Discouerie* was Parsons's response to Nichols's *Recantation* and *Oration* (*Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age*, p. 53). Bearman, on the other hand, regards the 'infamous Libell' referred to on the title-page of Nichols's *Oration and sermon* as Parsons and thus suggests that Nichols's *Oration and sermon* was his response to Parsons's *Discouerie* ('John Shakespeare's "Spiritual Testament"', p. 15). I place the *Discouerie* before *Oration and sermon* because, as we shall see shortly, Parsons himself reported that the *Discouerie* was published 'almost within a month' after Nichols published the *Declaration of the recantation*. According to the DNB, it was *A Confutation of Iohn Nicolls* that was published soon after the publication of the *Declaration of the recantation* (s.v. 'Nichols, John'). I have not been able to trace any copy of the pamphlet known to be extant.

¹⁶⁶ STC 18534. See Bearman, 'John Shakespeare's "Spiritual Testament": A Reappraisal', p. 15.

It was in this very year that Allen wrote to Agazzari that Parsons wished to have ‘three or four thousand or more of the testaments, for many people desire to have them’. In his letter Allen told Agazzari that he had received a report from Parsons regarding the religious situation in England,¹⁶⁷ and wrote of the Nichols controversy (English translation is Richard Simpson’s):

*Praedictus Joannes Nicolaus haereticus jactat se habuisse prolixam orationem Romae coram Cardinalibus (cum nihil minus verum) quam in secundo suo libro jam in lucem edidit, et simul pollicitus est se hunc et priorem latine verum evulgaturum, addito etiam quodam de Peregrinatione libello in quo maxima, homicidia et adulteria catholicorum, pessimam et vitam Jesuitarum et studiosorum fuse explicabit. Is jam Londini publice concionatur [. . .]*¹⁶⁸

The heretic John Nichols boasts that he made a long oration at Rome before the Cardinals (nothing can be more false), which he has just published in his second book, and has at the same time promised to publish the former turned into Latin, with an appendix of his travels, in which he will explain at length the horrible murders and adulteries of the Catholics, and the immoral life of the Jesuits and students. He now preaches publicly in London [. . .]¹⁶⁹

‘[S]ed [but]’, he said:

*illius jam omnes satietas cepit; brevi itaque (ut auguror) se in pedes conjiciet, praesertim vero ubi illa abjuratio haeresum quam Romae in Inquisitione fecit in Angliam pervenerit; accepi enim authenticum illud a vobis missum, in quo tota sua recantatio continebatur, et ad P. Rubertum in Angliam misi. Expetit P. Rubertus tria vel quatuor millia aut etiam plura ex Testamentis, cum illa a multis desiderentur.*¹⁷⁰

people are already universally tired of him; and I imagine that he will soon be tripped up, especially when the abjuration of heresies that he made at Rome in the Inquisition comes to England; for I have received the authentic copy of it which you sent, containing his whole recantation, and have sent it to F. Robert in England.

¹⁶⁷ Allen said: ‘*Ex Anglia accepimus per literas P. Ruberti Personni, vestrae Societatis, persecutionem perseverare in eodem fervore [furore] adhuc [. . .]*’ (*The Letters and Memorials of William Cardinal Allen*, ed. by Fathers of the Congregation of the London Oratory (London: David Butt, 1882), p. 95). I have not been able to trace Parsons’s letter. Although the original manuscript of Allen’s letter has not survived, two contemporary manuscript transcripts of the letter are preserved at the Public Record Office. Another contemporary manuscript transcript has been discovered at the archives of the Gesù at Rome (annotation to the letter, *The Letters and Memorials of William Cardinal Allen*, p. 95, n. 1). There are slight differences between the PRO copy and the Gesù copy. In the present thesis I follow the former.

¹⁶⁸ *The Letters and Memorials of William Cardinal Allen*, p. 96 (see also ns 4 and 5).

¹⁶⁹ Translated from Latin by Richard Simpson, *Edmund Campion: A Biography* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1866; new edn, London: John Hodges, 1896), p. 294 (new edn). Simpson used one of the two contemporary manuscript transcripts of Allen’s letter reserved now at the Public Record Office (see Simpson’s reference).

¹⁷⁰ *The Letters and Memorials of William Cardinal Allen*, p. 96.

Father Robert wants three or four thousand or more of the Testaments, for many persons desire to have them¹⁷¹

Citing Allen's letter, de Groot notes that his source is 'State Papers, Dom., Eliz., June 23, 1581, quoted by Richard Simpson [. . .]'.¹⁷² But this reference could be misleading, for Allen's original letter is not extant, and Simpson did not actually quote directly from it but translated into English a Latin copy of the letter in a contemporary hand. The manuscript which Simpson translated was one of the two surviving contemporary transcripts preserved at the Public Record Office.

Moreover, as Bearman points out, Simpson's translation has problems, which de Groot appears to be unaware of. Firstly, Simpson made 'one editorial change of great significance which could have led to a misinterpretation of the meaning of this passage': as my above citation of Simpson's English translation shows, he made the sentence that refers to 'the Testaments' the start of a new paragraph, which it is not in the document he was translating.¹⁷³ This editorial change has allowed the phrase to be taken out of context.¹⁷⁴ He believes the reference to Nichols's recantation and Parsons's request for the testaments to be linked. Bearman suggests that the phrase in question should be associated with Parsons's efforts to discredit Nichols.¹⁷⁵

Bearman spots another weakness in Simpson's translation. Allen's phrase in question reads: '*Expetit P. Robertus tria vel quatutor millia aut etiam plura ex*

¹⁷¹ Simpson's translation, p. 294. His translation, as we shall shortly see, has serious errors.

¹⁷² P. 232, n. 72.

¹⁷³ Bearman notes that the phrase is not punctuated as a new sentence. This is one of the aspects that has prompted Bearman to link the Nichols controversy and the 'Testaments'. However, in the modern printed transcript I used, it is punctuated as a new sentence. If this is consistent with the lost original, then it is possible that Allen's reference to the Nichols controversy and the 'Testaments' that Parsons was eager to obtain may not be connected.

¹⁷⁴ 'John Shakespeare's "Spiritual Testament": A Reappraisal', p. 16.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 16–7.

Testamentis, cum illa a multis desiderentur'.¹⁷⁶ As Bearman points out, Parsons wanted copies 'from the Testaments', not 'of the Testaments'.¹⁷⁷ Parsons, as we have seen, launched his first attack on Nichols in *A Discouerie of I. Nicols*. This pamphlet contained a section entitled 'new information from Rome of I. Nicols'. In this short section Parsons wrote:

As I had finished & deliuered this treatise to the print, ther[e] came vnto me an honest, discret & learned gentlema[n] fro[m] Rome who affirmed that vpon the sight of I. Nic[h]ols booke ther[e], & other informations [*sic*] of his doings in England, se[a]rche was made for his oration and sermon of ten sheetes of paper, presented in Rome before the Pope and regestred (as he saith) in three paper volumes in the office of Inquisition. The matter was easely found out, and a coppie taken word for word by publique Notaries: the com[m]on seale also of the office, was added vnto it, and [. . .] the most of all the cheefe officers names subscribed.¹⁷⁸

However:

[. . .] for some other further approbation (as I thinke) the thing is not hitherto sent from thence, or at least not yet come vnto my handes. [. . .] the Printer being not able to staye, nor I certaine how soone it will come, I iudg[e] it not a misse, to geue the reader some general intelligence of the matter (vntil the thinge it selfe maye be published in print) vppon the reporte of this discret gentleman, whoe bothe sawe it and read it, and remembreth well the principal contentes ther[e]of.¹⁷⁹

Bearman suggests that this documentary proof for which Parsons was waiting from Rome may have been 'the authentic copy' of Nichols's work 'containing his whole recantation' referred to in Allen's letter to Agazzari. Bearman thus suggests that 'what Parsons was so anxious to obtain' may have been 'copies taken from these proofs or evidences'.¹⁸⁰ In fact, *testamentum* could mean 'proof' in the late sixteenth century.¹⁸¹

Hence, Bearman's account appears plausible.

¹⁷⁶ Allen, *Letters of William Allen and Richard Barret, 1572–1598*, ed. by P. Renold, Catholic Record Society Publications (Records Series) 58 (Oxford: Oxonian for Catholic Record Society, 1967), pp. 95–6 (p. 96). The word '*Anglicis*' is omitted in the manuscripts at the Public Record Office (Renold, annotation to Allen's letter, *Letters of William Allen and Richard Barret, 1572–1598*, p. 96, n. 5. We shall come back to this issue shortly.)

¹⁷⁷ 'John Shakespeare's "Spiritual Testament": A Reappraisal', p. 17.

¹⁷⁸ STC 19402. The pamphlet is not paginated. EEBO has this section on document images 94ff (of 98).

¹⁷⁹ 'John Shakespeare's "Spiritual Testament": A Reappraisal', p. 17.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁸¹ R. E. Latham, *Revised Medieval Latin Word-list from British and Irish Sources* (London: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1965), s.v. 'testamentum'.

Bearman's alternative explanation for Parsons's request seems even more plausible. In one other contemporary copy of Allen's letter the phrase in question reads: '*tria vel quatuor millia aut etiam plura ex Testamentis Anglicis* [three or four thousand or even more from the English Testaments]'. Bearman argues that the word 'Anglicis' indicates the Rheims New Testament (illus. 13).¹⁸² De Groot has previously rejected this account for four reasons. Firstly:

[. . .] one fact makes the impression erroneous. The date is wrong. Dr. Allen's letter was written June 23, 1581, at least nine months too early for it to refer to the Rheims New Testament. *The First and Second Diaries of the English College, Duay* [. . .] reveal that, though the translation of the Vulgate New Testament into English was begun at Rheims by Gregory Martin on or about October 16, 1578, the work was not completed until March, 1582 [. . .] The title-page [of the Rheims New Testament] shows the book to have been 'printed at Rhemes by John Fogny, 1582'.¹⁸³

His second objection is the size of the Rheims New Testament:

Pope describes the book as a 'handsome quarto volume', in which the text alone filled 742 pages (3–745), and 'the very lengthy preface' and 'supplementary pieces' occupied forty-nine more. Three or four thousand copies of a 800-page quarto volume to be transported from Rome to England would present a problem in logistics knotty enough to baffle even the ingenious Jesuits. [. . .] though the problem of transportation were solved, the risk of getting such bulky merchandise past the port officers of England would be so great as to compel hesitation about going forward with the matter.¹⁸⁴

De Groot's third objection is that the price of the Rheims New Testament was so high — Pope estimated that the cost of publishing was £4 a copy — that the missionaries, even if they managed to smuggle the New Testaments into England, would still have great trouble in disposing of them.¹⁸⁵ Finally, this New Testament was printed at

¹⁸² 'John Shakespeare's "Spiritual Testament": A Reappraisal', p. 18. The Rheims New Testament was published under the title *The New Testament of Iesus Christ, translated faithfully into English, out of the authentical Latin* (Rheims, 1582). The epistle to *The New Testament of Iesus Christ* states: 'The Holy Bible long since translated by vs into English, and the old Testament lying by vs for lacke of good meanes to publish the whole in such sort as a worke of so great charge and importance requireth: we haue yet through Gods goodnes[s] at length fully finished for thee (most Christian reader) all the New Testament, which is the principle, most profitable & comfortable peece of holy writte: and, as wel for all other institution of life and doctrine, as specially for deciding the doubtes of these daies, more propere and pregnant then the other part not yet printed.'

¹⁸³ De Groot, p. 88.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

Rheims, so 'there would be little point in Dr. Allen's sending a request for copies from Rheims to Rome'.¹⁸⁶

Bearman, on the other hand, argues that de Groot has overlooked the circumstances in which the Rheims New Testament was produced: although it was translated by Gregory Martin, the whole project was Allen's 'brainchild'.¹⁸⁷ According to J. H. Pollen, it was Allen who 'conceived the plan of campaign' and 'enrolled and marshalled the men who executed it, who found the commissariat and supplies and gathered funds for the heavy expenses of the press, besides animating and encouraging all to execute their laborious tasks'. In fact, in a letter dated 16 September 1578 (altered to 1580), he wrote:

*[. . .] hi [catholicis] in academiis et scholis educati non habent fere Scripturae textum nec allegant nisi latinum, quem cum pro concione indocta conguntur mox in vulgarem linguam vertere, quia statim alicujus versionis vulgaria verba non sunt aut non occurrunt, saepe parum accommodata et non sine ingrata haesitatione transferunt; ubi adversarii ad unguem tenent ex haeretica aliqua versione omnia Scripturae loca quae pro ipsis facere videantur, et quadam composita fraude ac mutatione sacrorum verborum efficiunt tandem ut nihil loqui videantur nisi ex Bibliis. Cui malo utrinque mederi possit, si et nos haberemus aliquam catholicam versionem Bibliorum; omnes enim anglicae versiones sunt corruptissimae. [. . .] certe nos si sua Sanctitas faciendum judicabit, id etiam agemus ut fideliter, pure et genuine secundum approbatam ecclesiae editionem Biblia vertantur; cum ad hanc rem viros jam habeamus aptissimos.*¹⁸⁸

[Catholics educated in the academies and schools have hardly any knowledge of the Scriptures except in Latin. When they are preaching to the unlearned and are obliged on the spur of the moment to translate some passage into the vernacular, they often do it inaccurately and with unpleasant hesitation because either there is no vernacular version of the words, or it does not occur to them at the moment. Our adversaries, however, have at their finger tips from some heretical version all those passages of Scripture[s] which seem to make for them, and by a certain deceptive adaptation and alteration of the sacred words produce the effect of appearing to say nothing but what comes from the Bible. This evil might be remedied if we too had some Catholic version of the Bible, for all the English versions are most corrupted. [. . .] If his Holiness shall judge it expedient, we ourselves will endeavour to have the Bible faithfully, purely, and genuinely translated according to the edition approved by the Church, for we already have men most fitted for the work.¹⁸⁹]

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 88.

¹⁸⁷ Bearman, 'John Shakespeare's "Spiritual Testament": A Reappraisal', p. 18.

¹⁸⁸ *The Letters and Memorials of William Cardinal Allen*, pp. 64–5.

¹⁸⁹ Translated in Hugh Pope, *English Versions of the Bible* (London and St. Louis: B. Herder Book, 1952), p. 250.

The translation was entrusted to Martin, who began his work on 16 October 1578 and translated two chapters a day. Allen, along with Richard Bristow, revised and made notes.¹⁹⁰ Martin completed his translation in approximately two years; the *Rheims Annual Report* covering the period between June 1579 and September 1580 records that '[t]here is also complete but not yet published a very Catholic translation into the vernacular of the Bible' and that '[t]here are some other books written both in Latin and in English, and now ready for the press, but there is no opportunity of printing them'.¹⁹¹

On their way to England Parsons and Campion travelled to Rheims in June 1580 in order 'to conferre wth D^r Allen there Presid^t'.¹⁹² It seems reasonable to assume that from Allen Parsons may have heard of the newly translated New Testament. It is 'doubtless', suggests Bearman, Allen would have told them about the project, for the *Rheims Annual Report* records that 'our people most earnestly beg and expect this book from us'. Bearman thus concludes that the testaments that Allen said Parsons desired were the Rheims New Testament, which was, at this time, still awaiting the print.¹⁹³ There is another piece of evidence that indicates the demand for the new English Testament from English Catholics. In summer of 1580 Allen wrote to Cardinal Sirleto, the chief of the papal commissions which presided over discussion of

¹⁹⁰ 'Translating the Bible into English at Rheims', *The Month* (August 1922), 141–54 (p. 144); James G. Carleton, *The Part of Rheims in the Making of the English Bible* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902), pp. 13–22; Pope, *English Versions of the Bible*, pp. 249–51.

¹⁹¹ *Rheims Annual Report*, transcribed by Raymond Stanfield, in *The Douay College Diaries, Third, Fourth and Fifth, 1598–1654, with the Rheims Report, 1579–80, Vol. II*, ed. by Edwin H. Burton and Thomas L. Williams, Catholic Record Society Publications 11 (London: J. Whitehead & Son, 1911), pp. 553–66 (p. 565); Pollen, 'Translating the Bible into English at Rheims', 145–6. Pollen notes: 'The exact date [of the last entry of the *Rheims Annual Report*] is given by the passage, p. 558, "Ecce dum scribimus". This, compared with the college *Diarium*, p. 171, gives the date 18 September 1580' (p. 145, n. 1). Bearman, on the other hand, gives the date of July 1580 ('John Shakespeare's "Spiritual Testament": A Reappraisal', p. 18). The period from 16 October 1578 to 18 September 1580 is almost 2 years. See also James G. Carleton, pp. 13–22, and Pope, *English Versions of the Bible*, pp. 251–2.

¹⁹² Parsons's 1605 memoir (transcribed by Christopher Green in 1689), in 'The Memoirs of Father Robert Persons', ed. by J. H. Pollen, in *Miscellanea II*, Catholic Record Society Publications 2 (London: Arden for Catholic Record Society, 1906), pp. 12–218 (p. 199).

¹⁹³ 'John Shakespeare's "Spiritual Testament": A Reappraisal', pp. 18–9.

this matter, about '[t]he most prudent and religious Catholics in England having begged this [English translation] of us'.¹⁹⁴

One of the principal reasons for Parsons's decision to return to France in August 1581 was to discuss with Allen the publication of the English translation. On the receipt of the news of the arrest of Campion (17 July 1581), Parsons left London for Henley. Only two or three weeks later 'Stoner Park was suddenly searched; the press and all the material were seized, and John Stonor, William Hartley and Stephen Brinkley, together with four printers, hurried off to prison'. Parsons 'immediately withdrew to Michelgrove in Sussex, the home of William Shelley, who was at that time a prisoner for the faith'. There he learned by chance that the following night some priests among others would be secretly travelling to France and that he could go with them if he considered it suitable to him. 'It was a quick decision he had to take, and it was not easy to make up his mind'. Parsons wanted to confer with Allen about many things concerning the mission. Among them was 'to hasten the edition of the New Testament translated into English' because 'for this work and for the expenses of printing' Parsons 'had procured a thousand gold crowns from certain Catholic gentlemen'.¹⁹⁵

It is not difficult to counter de Groot's objections. Considering the objection that such a quantity of large books could ever have been dispatched to or imported into England — the Rheims New Testament did eventually prove to be a sizeable volume containing nearly 400 quarto leaves — Bearman shows that 'there is also

¹⁹⁴ Transcribed in Pollen, 'Translating the Bible into English at Rheims', 147.

¹⁹⁵ 'The Memoirs of Father Robert Persons', in *Miscellanea II*, p. xxxix; 'The Memoirs of Father Robert Persons (Concluded)', ed. by J. H. Pollen, in *Miscellanea IV*, Catholic Record Society Publications 4 (London: Arden for Catholic Record Society, 1907), pp. 1–161 (pp. 27 and 29). See also Pollen, 'Translating the Bible into English at Rheims', p. 150; Bearman, 'John Shakespeare's "Spiritual Testament": A Reappraisal', p. 19.

good evidence for the import of other large but less important volumes in quantities of one thousand and more'.¹⁹⁶

As to the objection regarding the difficulty of distribution in England, Allen's letter to Agazzari reports that '*putantur esse 20 millia catholicorum plura hoc anno quam praeterito* [it is estimated that there are twenty thousand more Catholics [in England] this year than the last]'.¹⁹⁷ The figure given here may be hyperbolic, but I believe that Bearman is not entirely wrong in that 'Parsons should be looking for a very substantial number of copies of what, to him, would be the Jesuits' main weapon in their battle against [. . .] heresies'.¹⁹⁸ What is more, the distribution of several thousand copies taken from the New Testament would be less difficult than de Groot suspected, for the majority of literate Catholics were wealthy gentlemen and their families.¹⁹⁹

As to the unlikelihood of Allen sending a request for copies from Rheims to Rome, de Groot's objection rests on his assumption that Allen was forwarding Parsons's request to Rome so that the testament would be sent to Parsons from Rome. There is, however, no evidence to support this assumption. Bearman, on the other hand, suggests that 'this can be accounted for by the need for papal approval', but if Allen needed approval from the pope, it seems odd that he wrote to Agazzari, not directly to the pope himself:

Expetit P. Robertus tria vel quartuor millia aut etiam plura ex Testamentis, cum illa a multis desiderantur. Dicit se summe desiderare et expectare plures socios vestri ordinis, et dicit omnia ibi recte procedere et Apologiam nostram valde probari.

¹⁹⁶ 'John Shakespeare's "Spiritual Testament": A Reappraisal', pp. 19–20. Bearman's examples include Richard Hopkins's translation of Luis of Granada's *Of Prayer and Meditation* (the 1582 edition is an octavo of 331 leaves, and the 1584 edition is a duodecimo of 346 leaves) and a translation of Diego de Estella's *Contempte of the World* (the 1584 edition is a duodecimo of 272 leaves).

¹⁹⁷ *The Letter and Memorials of William Cardinal Allen*, p. 98 (my translation). Bearman asserts that this report was 'Campion's claim', but in Allen's letter the source of this information is not so clear.

¹⁹⁸ 'John Shakespeare's "Spiritual Testament": A Reappraisal', p. 19.

¹⁹⁹ David Cressy, 'Levels of Illiteracy in England, 1530–1730', *Historical Journal* 21 (1977), 1–23; *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

[Father Robert asks for three or four thousand or more from the Testaments, because many desire them. He says that he intensely hopes and expects more associates of our order, and says that everything is proceeding well there and that our Apology is greatly approved.]²⁰⁰

Here Allen may have been simply reporting, not forwarding, Parsons's request. It is unfortunate that Parsons's letter has not survived, for if it were extant, it might clarify the issue.

With the evidence presented by Bearman and myself, it seems sensible to assert that Bearman's accounts of Parsons's request for the testaments, especially the Rheims Testament theory, are thus more likely explanations than de Groot's. These new theories question de Groot's belief that Jesuits circulated the Borromeo testament in Warwickshire.

One other major problem of the spiritual testament is that the connection between the testament and John Shakespeare himself has not been established.²⁰¹ We do not know if the testator's name was entered in the same hand as the rest of the testament. At his talk at the British Library, however, Holden strangely informed his audience that John had used a mark instead of writing down his name because he was illiterate. This account must be called into question. Malone clearly spelled out the testator's name 'John Shakspear' and did not state that it was a mark, which suggests that in the manuscript the testator's name was spelled out in full. In addition, the relic has since vanished without trace; therefore, Holden did not examine the original manuscript. As I asked him after the talk how he had obtained the information about John's use of a mark in the testament, he confessed that he had learned it from Honigmann. Honigmann's *Shakespeare: The 'Lost Years'*, however, does not mention anything about John's mark in the testament. Holden, though a journalist, did not

²⁰⁰ *The Letter and Memorials of William Cardinal Allen*, p. 96 (my translation).

²⁰¹ See, for example, Schoenbaum, 'A Detour into Lancashire', review of *Shakespeare: The 'Lost Years'* by E. A. J. Honigmann, *TLS*, 19 April 1985, pp. 423–4; Duncan-Jones, *Ungentle Shakespeare: Scenes from His Life* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2001), p. xii.

interview Honigmann, either; Honigmann has informed me that he has never met Holden, and suggested that Holden 'must have confused me with someone else'.²⁰²

Holden may have confused Honigmann and Honan, for the latter biographer comments that 'if John did mark or sign it, he kept his religious feelings as well hidden as the testament in his rafters'. Honan's suggestion has the same flaw as Holden's: Malone spelled out the testator's name — if the testator used a mark, why did Malone spell out his name? What is more, Honan's account suffers from inconsistency: earlier in his biography he has noted that 'a "John Shakspear" here [. . .] appears to sign, as the last paragraph indicates, in his own hand'.²⁰³

Honigmann notes that since the original document has vanished 'we do not know whether John Shakespeare wrote the complete text or simply inserted his name and patron saint etc. wherever the document left blanks to be filled in'.²⁰⁴ Over this comment, Schoenbaum raises his eyebrows: 'But could John Shakespeare have done either?'²⁰⁵ De Groot has a slightly different theory: if 'a signature was to be placed anywhere, it would certainly be upon the first sheet of such a document. Thereafter, the transcribing priest might well write the name of the testator as an integral part of his transcription'. He argues that 'the fact of John Shakespeare's ability or lack of ability to sign his name is not pertinent' because no one has seen the first sheet of the original document and the remaining sheets could have been written by a clerk. It is certainly 'pertinent' because John could sign the first sheet of the original document only if he was literate. It may be true that at the time of the publication of de Groot's

²⁰² Personal communication, 18 November 2002.

²⁰³ *Shakespeare: A Life*, pp. 39 and 38 respectively.

²⁰⁴ Honigmann, *Shakespeare: The 'Lost Years'*, p. 117.

²⁰⁵ 'A Detour into Lancashire', review of *Shakespeare: The 'Lost Years'*, *TLS*, 19 April 1985, pp. 423–4 (p. 424).

work 'the literacy of John Shakespeare has been accepted by many Shakespearean scholars', but we must test if this assumption can still remain valid.²⁰⁶

In Tudor and Stuart England children learned reading first. Writing, if learned at all, was 'a separate, secondary activity, not to be started until the primary skill of reading had been mastered'. Therefore, people who could sign their names could probably read as well. Lee claimed that 'there is evidence in the Stratford archives that he could write with facility'.²⁰⁷ Herbert Thurston, in the Catholic magazine *The Month*, writes that in the illustrated edition of Lee's biography 'a facsimile is given of John Shakespeare's real signature'.²⁰⁸ Unfortunately, Thurston is wrong: John's name is in the town clerk, Richard Symons's handwriting, and John employed a mark.

As David Cressy points out, '[t]here is a strong tradition in Shakespearian biography that is reluctant to concede that the senior Shakespeare was illiterate'.²⁰⁹ One may object that a mark does not indicate the inability to write and that John may have chosen to employ marks instead of signatures for 'mysterious reasons' of his own.²¹⁰ Oscar James Campbell and Edgar G. Quinn, for example, argue that the common mark in the form of a cross 'was not necessarily proof of illiteracy. When the cross was first placed upon legal documents it was a symbol of the Holy Cross and proof that the man who made it gave his assent religious sanctity. That is, it was the equivalent of an oath'.²¹¹ But Cressy and Charles Sisson argue that '[a] mark in the

²⁰⁶ De Groot, p. 90.

²⁰⁷ *A Life*, p. 5.

²⁰⁸ 'The Spiritual Testament of John Shakespeare', 499.

²⁰⁹ *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 58.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

²¹¹ *The Reader's Encyclopedia of Shakespeare* (New York: MJF Books, 1966), s.v. 'Shakespeare, John'.

shape of a cross, often added to a signature, was indeed a sanctifying symbol in the middle ages but by the sixteenth century its primary indication was illiteracy'.²¹²

It has been argued that John's marks in the form of a pair of compasses had religious significance. As we have seen, John was one of the five affeerors who witnessed the record of the frankpledge on 6 October 1559. On this occasion only two of the affeerors actually signed. The names of the other three including John's are in Symons's handwriting, and they appended marks. Fripp argues that John's mark — a pair of compasses — 'denotes, no doubt, "God encompasseth us"'.²¹³ Schoenbaum, however, argues that John's marks 'symbolize his trade and no more'.²¹⁴ More importantly, as Cressy points out, it seems fair to suggest that the reason 'the other affeerors and associates of John [. . .] irreverently signed their names' was 'that they were the only ones who could write'.²¹⁵ It may be also objected that literate persons on occasion used a mark. Adrian Quiney, for example, was able to sign his name for his letters are extant, but he used a mark ('an inverted upper-case Q') on a corporation's order.²¹⁶ Yet the problem in the case of John, as Schoenbaum stresses, is that 'not a single signature by him is extant'.²¹⁷

It may be tempting to assume that John was literate because he enjoyed a series of promotions in his duties, or even that his literacy may have allowed him to achieve such a success. Campbell and Quinn, for example, argue that '[i]t would be strange if the burghers of Stratford had chosen an illiterate man for the important

²¹² *Literacy and the Social Order*, p. 214, n. 50. See also Charles Sisson, 'Marks as Signatures', *Library* 9 (1928), 5–12.

²¹³ Introduction to *Minutes and Accounts*, I: 1553–1566, p. xlvii; introduction to *Minutes and Accounts*, II: 1566–1577, p. 1.

²¹⁴ *Documentary Life*, p. 36.

²¹⁵ Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order*, p. 58.

²¹⁶ *Documentary Life*, p. 36. See the facsimile of the signatures and marks of the bailiff, aldermen and burgesses in *Minutes and Accounts*, I: 1553–1566, between pp. 134 and 135, or in *Documentary Life*, p. 33, fig. 39.

²¹⁷ *Documentary Life*, p. 30.

offices that Shakespeare's father held'.²¹⁸ But literacy was probably 'never a prerequisite' of these duties:

Hundreds of parochial officials were unable to sign their names but the tasks of record-keeping and rendering of accounts must be easier for the others who were literate. Literate and illiterate alike appeared before the manor courts as tenants, before the church and secular courts as witnesses or plaintiffs, and dealt with landlords, creditors and others who used writing to regulate and endorse their activities. Knowing how to read and write must have helped in these affairs, but the verbal process of the courts and the availability of professional scribes enabled people without those skills to manage. [. . .] People could cope with illiteracy and might have no sense of its being a handicap.²¹⁹

Although propagandists proclaimed the importance of literacy for religious and secular purposes, 'the majority of the population remained illiterate, at least to the extent that they could not write'. England 'remained only a partially literate society'. Many people 'lived on the margins of literacy' and had little need for it. 'Opportunities to learn reading and writing were constrained by social, economic and domestic circumstances while facilities for the dissemination of basic literacy were underdeveloped'.²²⁰

John made official accounts as chamberlain on 11 January 1564, 21 March 1565 and 15 February 1566.²²¹ Campbell and Quinn assert that John and his colleague kept the account books,²²² but the surviving account books were written by the town clerk, Richard Symons. Campbell and Quinn's assertion appears to be based on the assumption that Symons used drafts written by John. But no such drafts are extant. Literacy was not a prerequisite for the office of chamberlain; many towns were served by professional and paraprofessional scribes and scriveners who met the needs of their towns and parishes,²²³ and Symons or another scribe could have assisted John, writing drafts of the accounts next to him. In December 1568 John issued precepts for the

²¹⁸ *The Reader's Encyclopedia of Shakespeare*, s.v. 'Shakespeare, John'.

²¹⁹ Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order*, pp. 10–11 and 13.

²²⁰ Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order*, pp. 13–8 (pp. 13 and 17–8). See also chapter 3 in *Literacy and the Social Order*.

²²¹ *Minutes and Accounts*, I: 1953–1566, pp. 126–9, 137–41 and 148–52.

²²² *The Reader's Encyclopedia of Shakespeare*, s.v. 'Shakespeare, John'.

²²³ Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order*, p. 16.

arrest of two parishioners, but the records are, once again, in Symons's handwriting.²²⁴ Evidence seems to give the impression that John may have in fact managed to hold his offices without the skill of writing.

'Writing was never so important as reading'. Cressy suggests that 'it seems reasonable to believe that most people who learned to write did so as a result of some instruction, whether formal or informal, and that this took place during childhood or adolescence'. He has shown that 'the acquisition of literacy involved discipline and practice, and success was unlikely without strong motivation on the part of the child and his parents and patience and skill on the part of his instructor'.²²⁵ It seems questionable that John had an opportunity to have such instruction when he was young. As Schoenbaum points out, since John was raised as 'a humble tenant farmer's son in a country village without a school, his educational opportunities were strictly limited'.²²⁶

Cressy informs us that craftsmen 'who were unable to write sometimes demonstrated a degree of penmanship by sketching representational marks, a tailor drawing some scissors or a mason depicting his hammer' and that 'many of these trades people could no doubt read, even if they had trouble writing'.²²⁷ John may have belonged to this category of literacy (so-called 'passive literacy'), for he usually employed as his sign a cross or a pair of compasses probably symbolising his trade, and never, so far as we know, signed his name in full.²²⁸ It seems reasonable to assume, though there is no means to prove with certainty, that John was passively literate or semi-literate at best, as Duncan-Jones does. Nevertheless, John's passive

²²⁴ *Minutes and Accounts*, II: 1566–1577, pp. 17–8.

²²⁵ Cressy, 'Levels of Illiteracy in England, 1530–1730', 10–11; *Literacy and the Social Order*, pp. 6 and 19.

²²⁶ *Documentary Life*, p. 36.

²²⁷ 'Levels of Illiteracy in England, 1530–1730', 8.

²²⁸ See, for example, Schoenbaum, *Documentary Life*, p. 30, fig. 35. See also *Minutes and Accounts*, I: 1553–1566, p. 119.

literacy would only lead us to the same conclusion: John could neither write the complete testament nor insert his name in full. For Holden, however, the logic goes the other way around. Since he has no doubt at all that the testament belonged to the dramatist's father, who was illiterate (according to Holden), he concludes that John must have used a mark.

It is unhelpful to speculate that the testament may have belonged to the corvizer John Shakespeare, whose religious belief we do not know anything about because it would only raise another question why the corvizer's property would have been found between the rafters and the tiling of the roof of the glover's house.²²⁹

The surviving texts of the spiritual testament have a blank space where the testator was required to insert a saint's name. The testator of the Birthplace manuscript inserted St. Winifrid. Despite the attempt to suppress the cult of saints during the Reformation, pilgrimages to St. Winifrid's well at Holywell in North Wales continued into the seventeenth century. In 1629 it was reported that '1,400 or 1,500 laity, including nobility and gentry, with their priests visited the site on her feast day'. In 1633 the bishop of St. Asaph reported to the archbishop of Canterbury the 'number and boldness of Romish recusants' and their 'frequent concourse . . . to Holywell'.²³⁰ Moreover, a record of some fifty cures at St. Winifrid's well during the years 1556–1674 contains 'a disproportionate number' of south Warwickshire cases. Bearman thus conjectures that in the seventeenth century some unknown Catholic could have inserted St. Winifrid in his or her copy of the testament.²³¹

²²⁹ For the corvizer John Shakespeare, see *Facts and Problems*, II, p. 3; *Minutes and Accounts*, III: 1577–1586, p. 155, n. 2; *Outlines*, pp. 137–40.

²³⁰ Quoted in Bearman, 'John Shakespeare's "Spiritual Testament": A Reappraisal', p. 29. Ian Wilson argues that the link between Shakespeare and Sir John Salusbury can be explained only if Shakespeare, with his parents, visited St. Winifrid's well, both Denbighshire (where Salusbury lived) and Flintshire (where St. Winifrid's well was) being in north Wales (p. 55). See my discussion of Shakespeare's 'Let the bird of loudest lay' in chapter 4.

²³¹ Bearman, 'John Shakespeare's "Spiritual Testament": A Reappraisal', p. 29. Bearman provides four examples (p. 29) but not the exact number of Warwickshire cases.

Towards the end of the testament it is stated that the testament should be buried with the testator. Bearman suspects that a copy of the spiritual testament may have been recovered from a grave in the eighteenth century — some 150 years after it was printed and signed by a Catholic — which could explain its damaged condition (loss of the first leaf). Bearman asserts that in the eighteenth century a discovery of this sort would not be as unlikely as it would be today: ‘[u]ntil the middle of the eighteenth century, human remains were routinely dug up to make room for more burial space, and the bones consigned to charnel houses’.²³²

The Birthplace manuscript has vanished without trace. As McManaway points out, ‘[t]he watermarks in the paper would not only help date the document but would show where the paper had been made’.²³³ Conlan asserts that the lost manuscript ‘is, in and of itself, strong evidence of John Shakespeare’s ongoing adherence to Roman Catholicism’.²³⁴ But close analysis of the document and the circumstance in which the spiritual testament is said to be delivered to John, and the re-examination of the previous accounts of the event make possible a different story: that the five leaves of the manuscript sent to Malone were forged after the mid-seventeenth century.

IV. Mary Arden and the Ardens of Park Hall

Biographers who insist that the spiritual testament belonged to the dramatist’s father must answer the following question: ‘Why was the testament found in such an obscure place as “between the rafters and the tiling of the roof”?’ For them the answer originates in the so-called Somerville conspiracy.

²³² Bearman, ‘John Shakespeare’s “Spiritual Testament”: A Reappraisal’, p. 29.

²³³ ‘John Shakespeare’s “Spiritual Testament”’, 205.

²³⁴ ‘Shakespeare and Research’, *Shaksper*, 29 January 2003 (no pagination).

In the summer and autumn of 1583, when the Jesuit mission reached its peak, particularly by virtue of the preaching and subsequent martyrdom of Campion, the persecution of recusants, missionaries and Jesuits also reached its most severe level and brought terror and disaster to the Ardens of Park Hall. The religious zeal of Edward Arden, the head of the Park Hall family, was such that he even kept a private chaplain Fr. Hugh Hall (disguised as a gardener) despite the penalties attached to such practices as harbouring priests and hearing Mass. On 25 October 1583 their mentally unbalanced son-in-law, John Somerville, eluded his family and set out for London, where he openly uttered a threat to assassinate the queen. He was arrested and sent to the Tower of London before he reached the queen.

The Somerville conspiracy led to persecution of recusants in the area. On 31 October a warrant was issued to apprehend 'such as shall be in any way akin to all touched, and to search their houses'.²³⁵ The persecution was entrusted to the local magistrate, Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote, who had received a Puritan education from John Foxe. Sir Thomas worked alongside the clerk of the Privy Council, Thomas Wilkes, who arrived at Charlecote on 2 November. Sir Thomas and Wilkes were assisted by Lucy's agent, Henry Rogers, the town clerk of Stratford. Yet the investigators were not able to find evidence of treason. On 7 November Wilkes wrote from Charlecote to Sir Francis Walsingham:

Unless you can make Somerville, Arden, Hall the priest, Somerville's wife and his sister to speak directly to those things which you desire to have discovered, it will not be possible for us here to find out more than is found already, for the papists in this county [i.e., Warwickshire] greatly do work upon the advantage of cleaning their houses of all shows of suspicion.²³⁶

²³⁵ Quoted in Mutschmann and Wentersdorf, p. 52; also in Milward, *Shakespeare's Religious Background*, p. 22.

²³⁶ Quoted in Mutschmann and Wentersdorf, p. 52.

It is quite possible, as Milward, Ian Wilson and Richard Wilson suggest, that these investigations reached John Shakespeare's family through his wife.²³⁷ It has been speculated that at the time of the Somerville conspiracy John Shakespeare, needing to avert suspicion just as other Catholics in Warwickshire, hid his spiritual testament between the rafters and the tiling of the roof of his house in order to avoid its detection.

I have already pointed out weaknesses and inconsistencies in the accounts of the spiritual testament. Another main weakness of the speculations presented by Milward, Ian Wilson and Richard Wilson is that the connection between Mary *née* Arden and the Ardens of Park Hall (one of the few families in England who could trace their ancestry before the Norman Conquest) has not been established. Mutschmann and Wentersdorf state, as if it were fact, that the Ardens of Park Hall were John and Mary Shakespeare's kin, and provide genealogical tables showing that Thomas Arden, Mary's grandfather, was the second son of Walter Arden of Park Hall. It is not easy to identify the German biographers' evidence for the genealogy since their biographical study does not provide references. Mary Power (Sister Maura) similarly links Mary with the Ardens of Park Hall without providing any evidence.²³⁸

The earliest indisputable notice of Shakespeare's family on his mother's side that has been discovered is the commencement of a deed drawn up on 16 May 1501. It records the purchase of an estate in Snitterfield by Mary's grandfather Thomas Arden of Wilmcote and his son Robert:

Sciant presentes et futuri quod ego, Johannes Mayowe de Snytterfeld, dedi, concessi, et hac presenti carta mea confirmavi Roberto Throkmerton, armigero,

²³⁷ Milward, *Shakespeare's Religious Background*, p. 21; Ian Wilson, *Shakespeare: The Evidence*, pp. 48 and 53; Richard Wilson, "'No News but the Old News': Shakespeare and the Tragedy of Arden", paper presented at the conference 'Shakespeare and the Warwickshire Catholic World' (organised by the Centre for the Study of the Renaissance, University of Warwick, held at Stratford-upon-Avon, 19 September 1998); Richard Wilson, 'A World Elsewhere: Shakespeare's Sense of an Exit', *Shakespeare Lecture, Proceedings of the British Academy* 117 (2001), pp. 165–99 (pp. 169 and 179–80).

²³⁸ *Shakespeare's Catholicism* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside, 1924), pp. 134–5.

Thome Trussell de Billesley, Rogero Reynoldes de Heenley-in-Arden, Willielmo Wodde de Wodhouse, Thome Arden de Wylmecote et Roberto Arden, filio ejusdem Thome Arden, unum mesuagium, cum suis pertinenciis, in Snytterfeld.²³⁹

Mutschmann and Wentersdorf's bibliography does not list George Russell French's *Shakespeareana Genealogica* (1869), probably the first attempt to identify Mary's grandfather, Thomas, with the second son of Walter Arden of Park Hall.²⁴⁰ The biographers, however, list Stopes's *Shakespeare's Environment* (1914), in which she argues for the identification in question and refers to French's work.

Robert Throckmorton in the document cited above, according to Stopes, was Robert Throckmorton of Coughton, who was knighted in November 1501. His son, George, succeeded him, and Edward Arden of Park Hall was brought up in his care and married Mary, his son Robert's daughter. Stopes notes that Robert Arden's first and third daughters Agnes and Katharine had Throckmorton names. She adds that Joane, Robert's one other daughter, shares her name with the otherwise unknown wife of Thomas Trussell, who appears in the document cited above. Stopes thus argues that two men who had the same name, lived in the same county, and retained the same friends must have been one and the same man, and concludes that it 'seems perfectly natural and just' that Mary's grandfather should be identified with the second son of Walter Arden of Park Hall 'when no other claimant has ever been brought forward'.²⁴¹

Biographers' opinions about the plausibility of Stopes's argument vary. As I have pointed out, Mutschmann and Wentersdorf, Milward, Ian Wilson and Richard Wilson support the connection between the Ardens of Wilmcote and the Ardens of Park Hall, although they do not present any further evidence. Other biographers are more reluctant to consider Stopes's argument 'perfectly natural and just'. Lee, for

²³⁹ Transcribed in *Outlines*, II, p. 207

²⁴⁰ *Shakespeareana Genealogica* (London and Cambridge: Macmillan, 1869), pp. 416–69, especially pp. 426–30, 450–3, 462, and 465–7.

²⁴¹ p. 51.

example, notes that ‘John Shakespeare’s wife belonged to a humble branch of the [Arden] family, and there is no trustworthy evidence to determine the exact degree of kinship between the two branches’. Schoenbaum admits that ‘the precise branch to which Robert Arden belonged remains obscure’.²⁴²

Chambers’s view is far more clear-cut: it is ‘necessary to distinguish Thomas of Wilmcote from the contemporary Thomas of Park Hall (1526–62)’. The Ardens, according to Chambers, are traceable in the neighbourhood of Stratford long before the time of Walter of Park Hall, and he suggests that the Ardens of Wilmcote must have split off earlier than Stopes and her followers assert. One Robert Arden of Snitterfield and his wife joined the Guild of Stratford in 1440–1.²⁴³ Presumably, Robert was the bailiff of a manor in Snitterfield in the middle of the fifteenth century and a recent farmer of the demesne in 1461.²⁴⁴ Chambers suggests that he was an ancestor of Mary’s grandfather, Thomas. Sir Henry Arden had ‘a special relationship to Thomas de Beauchamp’, earl of Warwick, and his son Robert was in the custody of Joan Beauchamp as a minor in 1420.²⁴⁵ She had Snitterfield in dower from 1411 to 1435, and conceivably Robert Arden was ‘a *cadet* of Arden placed in Snitterfield during [Joan’s] time or her husband’s’ and must have been a grandson (‘a son of one of the younger sons’) of Sir Henry.²⁴⁶

V. John Shakespeare’s Coat of Arms

The College of Arms preserves two rough drafts both dated 20 October 1596 of a grant of a coat of arms to John Shakespeare. The drafts were prepared by Sir William

²⁴² *A Life of William Shakespeare*, p. 6.

²⁴³ *Facts and Problems*, II, pp. 30 and 32.

²⁴⁴ *Outlines*, II, p. 366; *Facts and Problems*, II, p. 32.

²⁴⁵ Dugdale, quoted in *Facts and Problems*, II, p. 32.

²⁴⁶ *Facts and Problems*, II, p. 32.

Dethick, garter king of arms. One of the drafts carries a note at the end: 'This John shoethe A patierne therof vnder Clarent Cooks hand <?on> paper xx years past'.²⁴⁷

The twenty years may be taken as an approximate figure, although Conlan takes it literally.²⁴⁸ Mutschmann and Wentersdorf observe that John's first application of 'xx years past' indicates his wealth.²⁴⁹ However, the evidence appears to dismiss Mutschmann and Wentersdorf's observation. John's re-application in 1596 suggests that arms were not granted to him when he first applied. John's approach to the heralds in 1596 was a renewal of his earlier application.²⁵⁰

Three years later (1599) John again approached the heralds. A rough draft of the 1599 assignment of arms preserved in the College of Arms states that John 'produced this his Auncient Cote of Arms heretofore Assigned to him whilest he was her ma[jes]t[i]es officer & Baylefe of that Towne'.²⁵¹ This 'Auncient Cote of Arms' may refer to the original pattern prepared by Robert Cook, clarenceux king of arms 'xx years' before 1596. The 1599 draft records that John was allowed to impale his

²⁴⁷ Transcribed in Stephen Tucker, *The Assignment of Arms to Shakespeare and Arden, 1596–1599* (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1884), p. 8; in Halliwell-Phillipps, *The Life of William Shakespeare*, pp. 76–7; in *Facts and Problems*, pp. 18–20. A facsimile of the draft is attached to the left-hand page of Tucker's transcription as well as in *Documentary Life*, p. 169.

²⁴⁸ 'Shakespeare and Research', *Shaksper*, 29 January 2003 (no pagination).

²⁴⁹ P. 42.

²⁵⁰ Scott-Giles suspects that it was William Shakespeare who took the initiative in the matter, acting in his father's name. William 'gratified the old man's ambition (and no doubt his own) by obtaining the long desired coat of arms'. According to this assumption, 'the terms, and particularly the alterations and additions, probably represent information given and suggestions made by William Shakespeare sitting in conference with the heralds' (pp. 34 and 29 respectively). Joseph Quincy Adams suggests that it was William who was interested in the grant of arms (*A Life of William Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1923), p. 243). Edward Eliott Willoughby claims that '[William] Shakespeare himself serves as an example of how a middle class man, upon attaining a moderate degree of wealth, desired the right to bear arms' (*A Printer of Shakespeare: The Works and Times of William Jaggard* (London: Philip Allan, 1934), p. 267). Raymond Carter Sutherland, however, objects that the last two accounts present 'a widely held misconception' that William secured the grant of arms. ('The Grants of Arms to Shakespeare's Father', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 14 (1963), 379–85 (p. 375)). Since whether it was John or his son who took the initiative in the matter is not the issue I would like to discuss in the present chapter, I simply use 'Shakespeare' (whether John, William acting in his father's name, or the Shakespeare family) heretofore. We must remember, however, that surviving documents clearly state that the grant was given to John.

²⁵¹ Transcribed in Tucker, p. 9; also in C. W. Scott-Giles, *Shakespeare's Heraldry* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1950), p. 38; and in Halliwell-Phillipps, *The Life of William Shakespeare*, pp. 79–80.

own coat with 'the Auncyent Arms of the said Arden of Wellingcote [*sic*']'.²⁵² The application of 1599 thus appears to have been for an exemplification of the arms with the inclusion of those of the Ardens for John's wife, Mary *née* Arden. As Mary was a co-heiress of her father, it can be presumed that Shakespeare attempted to include the arms of the Ardens. The grant authorised him either to bear the arms of Shakespeare alone or to impale the Arden arms. During the course of assignment of the arms of the Ardens, 'some doubt' appears to have arisen as to the arms proper to the Ardens of Wilmcote. The draft shows a trick of the arms of Shakespeare impaling the coat of the Ardens of park Hall (*ermine, a fess checky or and azure*).²⁵³ The latter, however, was cancelled by scribbling, and a half coat was drawn at the side, showing *gules, three cross crosslets fitchy and a chief or, with a martlet for difference*.²⁵⁴ According to Scott-Giles, Shakespeare wished to obtain the right to the arms of Arden of Park Hall, but the heralds were not satisfied with the proof that Robert Arden of Wilmcote was descended from the Ardens of Park Hall. Accordingly, they assigned Shakespeare a differenced form of 'the Auncyent Arms' of Arden.²⁵⁵

According to Mutschmann and Wentersdorf, on the other hand, the arms allowed to the Ardens of Wilmcote were those of the Catholic Ardens of Warwick and Bedfordshire, and the assignment of these arms indicates that Robert Arden of Wilmcote was descended from the said Arden family. The German biographers assert that it was the heralds, not Shakespeare, who made the first claim to the arms of Arden

²⁵² Transcribed in Tucker, p. 10; also in Scott-Giles, p. 39.

²⁵³ Fess: 'an ordinary crossing the field from flank to flank at the level of the visual center: the width is one-third of that of the shield'. Checky: 'a variation of the field consisting of squares of alternate metal (or fur) and tincture'. Julian Franklyn and John Tanner, *An Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Heraldry* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1970).

²⁵⁴ Gules: 'red'. ('It is represented in engraving by lines running parallel with each other, from the chief to the base'. Francis J. Grant, *The Manual of Heraldry* (Edinburgh: John Grant, [n. y.]; repr. 1962), s.v. 'gules'.) Cross crosslet: 'a cross humetty with a short traverse on each limb'. Fitchy: 'of a cross having the lower limb drawn to a long, tapering point'. Chief: 'an ordinary one-third of the width of the shield, occupying the uppermost section of the field'. Martlet: 'the heraldic swallow'. Franklyn and Tanner.

²⁵⁵ Scott-Giles, p. 33.

of Park Hall and that it was Shakespeare, not the heralds, who ‘adopted’ the arms of Arden of Warwick and Bedfordshire.²⁵⁶ Presumably, Shakespeare pointed out the heralds’ mis-assignment of the arms. According to this theory, Shakespeare obtained the right to impale the arms of Arden as he had wished to. However, there is no evidence that William Shakespeare ever used the impaled arms of Shakespeare and Arden. The arms of Arden do not appear on the Shakespeare monument on the wall above Shakespeare’s grave in Holy Trinity Church, Stratford. None of his descendants impaled or quartered the Arden arms, either. It appears that Shakespeare decided not to impale ‘the auncyent arms’ of Arden, which suggests further that Mutschmann and Wentersdorf’s theory is unlikely to be the case.

Although Conlan accepts Mutschmann and Wentersdorf’s theory,²⁵⁷ a close analysis of the German biographers’ genealogy of the Ardens discloses flaws in their argument. They assert that the Ardens of Wilmcote were descendants of the Ardens of Warwick and Bedfordshire, not of Park Hall. However, their genealogical tables (B and C) at the end of their book show that Robert Arden of Wilmcote was a son of Thomas Arden, a second son of Walter Arden of Park Hall, Castle Bromwich (near Birmingham). The genealogy appears inconsistent. The theory would otherwise require us to accept the unlikely event that either Thomas or Robert Arden of Park Hall established a new branch of the family of Warwick and Bedfordshire (for which no evidence has been presented), left the new residence, and settled at Wilmcote in the parish of Aston Cantlow by 1501 (when they were described as residents of Wilmcote in a grant of an estate at Snitterfield). Although I have not been able to verify the

²⁵⁶ Mutschmann and Wentersdorf, p. 66. As the German biographers do not clarify the source for their identification of the arms, I have not been able to confirm that the arms allowed to the Ardens of Wilmcote were indeed those of the Ardens of Warwick and Bedfordshire.

²⁵⁷ ‘Shakespeare and Research’, *Shaksper*, 29 January 2003.

pedigree of the mysterious 'Catholic Ardens of Warwick and Bedfordshire',²⁵⁸ the heralds described the arms allowed to the Ardens of Wilmcote as being 'auncyent', and the arms of Arden of Warwick and Bedfordshire and those of Arden of Park Hall (both tricked on the rough draft preserved in the College of Arms) do not bear any resemblance at all. These points suggest that it is unlikely that the two Arden families in question were as closely related as Mutschmann and Wentersdorf's theory implies.²⁵⁹

French observes that Mary *née* Arden's grandfather Thomas was a second son of Walter Arden of Park Hall. Simon Arden (d. 1600), who purchased the manor of Longroft in Staffordshire before 1590, was the second son of Thomas Arden of Park Hall (d. 1563), eldest son of Sir John Arden of Park Hall (d. 1526).²⁶⁰ Simon was sheriff of Warwickshire. According to French, this Simon was given in 1568/9 (11 Eliz.) the coat of arms, *gules, three cross crosslets fitchy and a chief or*. French thus argues that 'there is nothing surprising in the coat, *fesse chequy*, being scored over, and the coat of *cross-crosllets* put in its place, for both were used by the Warwickshire Ardens'.²⁶¹ This theory does not carry conviction. We must presume that the heralds added a martlet (on the Arden arms granted to the Ardens of Wilmcote) for a difference. The martlet signifies a younger (usually the fourth) son of the family, but Thomas and Robert Arden of Wilmcote were not descended from Simon Arden of Longroft; therefore, they were not entitled to the arms of Arden of Longroft.

²⁵⁸ One branch of the Arden family in Bedfordshire can be traced to the early thirteenth century (*The Victoria History of the County of Bedford*, ed. by William Page, 3 vols plus Index (London: Archibald Constable, 19–1914), III, 220). I have written to the College of Arms to see if I could conduct further research on the pedigree of the Ardens, but there has been no reply.

²⁵⁹ According to William Dugdale, Thomas succeeded his brother John in 1525 or 1526 (17 Hen. VIII). (*The Antiquities of Warwickshire*, 2 vols (London: Longman, 1656; 2nd edn, revised by William Thomas, 1730), II, p. 930).

²⁶⁰ See, for example, the genealogical table in Henry Drummond, *Histories of Noble British Families*, 2 vols (London: William Pickering, 1846), I, p. 4.

²⁶¹ French, pp. 424 and 519–20.

Charles Crisp, on the other hand, argues that the arms allowed to the Ardens of Wilmcote were those of Arden of Aldford and Alvanley in Cheshire and of Elford in Staffordshire with a martlet for difference.²⁶² About 1200 an individual called Sir John de Arderne (or Ardena) lived in Cheshire. He possessed 'powers extending over twenty lordships', only 'little inferior to those of the Barons themselves' and built a castle at this place. His son Walkelyn was lord of Eldford in Staffordshire. He married Agness, daughter of Philip de Orreby, justice of Chester from 1208 to 1226, by whom he obtained the manor of Elveldelie or Alvandeleigh (Alvanley). The first arms which appear borne by any of Sir John's descendants are in 1289.²⁶³ In the case of the elder branch of the Arden family in Warwickshire, which took its arms from the Novoborgos (Newburghs), former earls of Warwick, 'the principal parts retained were generally the checky *or* and *azure*, and sometimes the *ermine*'. In the branch in Cheshire, on the other hand, its arms have no affinity with the arms of Novoborgo, but 'the fess of the Bellocampos [later earls of Warwick] is lifted up by the Ardernes into a chief, and the cross crosslets become generally, but not always, fitché [*fitchy*]'.²⁶⁴ It was undesirable to duplicate armorial bearings, for distinction was the essence of heraldry. A junior member of the family thus normally borne the arms of the head of the family with 'some minor but sufficient difference'.²⁶⁵ A single martlet was used as the cadency mark of a fourth son of the house.²⁶⁶ Crisp thus suggests that the arms allowed to the Ardens of Wilmcote indicates that Robert Arden was descended from a

²⁶² 'Shakespeare's Ancestors', *Coat of Arms* 6 (1960), 105–9. See also French, pp. 495–6 where he discusses the pedigree of the Ardens of Cheshire. French also talks of the Ardens of Longcroft Hall, Staffordshire, a branch derived through Simon Arden (d. 1600), second son of Thomas Arden of Park Hall (d. 1563), eldest son of Sir John Arden of Park Hall (d. 1526) (pp. 499–503).

²⁶³ Drummond, I, s.v. 'Arden, Eardene, Arderne, and Compton', pp. 6 and 8. See the genealogical table of the Ardens of Cheshire in Drummond, I, pp. 6–8.

²⁶⁴ Drummond, I, s.v. 'Arden, Eardene, Arderne, and Compton', pp. 5, 8, and 10 (p. 10). See Drummond, p. 5 for the arms of the eldest branch of the Ardens of Warwickshire, and p. 11 for the arms of Arden of Cheshire.

²⁶⁵ Scott-Giles, pp. 7–8 (p. 8).

²⁶⁶ Franklyn and Tanner, s.v. 'martlet'; Grant, s.v. 'martlet' (see also pp. 24–5); Crisp, 107.

younger son of the Cheshire and Staffordshire family. He speculates that a younger son of the family from Elford, near Tamworth, may have entered the service of the earl of Warwick who owned Sutton Chase, a few miles from Elford, and that one of his descendants may have been the Robert Arden who was bailiff of the earl of Warwick in Snitterfield.²⁶⁷

Above the shield and crest on one of the drafts of 1596 Dethick wrote a phrase 'non, sanz droict [not, without right]'. He scored it through and added 'Non, Sanz droict'.²⁶⁸ On the right side of them, he wrote 'NON SANZ DROICT [not without right]'. On the other draft of 1596 Dethick wrote 'Non Sanz droict'. It does not appear on the 1599 draft. Conlan regards Dethick's errors as insults that reveal his 'hostility' towards John 'on the part of the heralds who wanted to delegitimize his rightful claim to a heraldic coat — a desire fully consistent with the suspicion that as a recusant John Shakespeare did not merit this privilege of gentility to which holding the elected office entitled him'.²⁶⁹ However, there were no grounds for Dethick to suspect that John might be a recusant when he re-applied for a grant of a coat of arms in 1596; therefore, there was no reason that Dethick 'wanted to delegitimize' John's claim to a coat of arms. Conlan, a great admirer of Mutschmann and Wentersdorf, may have believed that the errors of the phrase and the trick of the arms of Arden of Park Hall appear on the same draft, although the errors appear on one of the two drafts of 1596 while the arms of Arden of Park Hall appear on the draft of 1599.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁷ Crisp, 107–9.

²⁶⁸ Schoenbaum (*Documentary Life*, p. 167) claims that Dethick wrote 'Non, Sanz Droict' (that is, with three initial capitals), but the 'd' is written in a lowercase letter.

²⁶⁹ *Shaksper*, 29 January 2003 (no pagination). It has been assumed that the phrase is a motto. Curiously, it does not appear either on the draft of 1599 or on the Shakespeare monument in Holy Trinity Church.

²⁷⁰ It is unfortunate that I cannot get hold of Samuel Tannenbaum's *The Shakespeare Coat-of-Arms* (New York: Tenny, 1908) even through the inter-library loans office. I have been informed that the copy at the National Library of Ireland — apparently, this is the only copy available in the British Isles, for the British Library could not trace any other British Isles location — is for reference use only.

VI. Shakespeare's Marriage

The Episcopal register of the diocese of Worcester for 27 November 1582 records the entry of a marriage licence to Shakespeare: '*Item eodem die similis emanavit licencia inter Willelmum Shaxpere et Annam Whateley de Temple Grafton* [Also on the same day a similar licence was issued between William Shakespeare and Anne Whateley of Temple Grafton]'.²⁷¹ It has been presumed that the clerk, who made several mistakes with other entries, erred in recording the bride's name. Schoenbaum, for example, suggests that 'perhaps he copied it carelessly from the applicant's allegation stating upon oath the names, addresses, and occupations of the parties (as well as other information)'. As Schoenbaum comments, 'the reference to Temple Grafton [. . .] presents another puzzle' because Anne is thought to have been from another village.

It is precisely this 'puzzle' that has allowed some biographers to Catholicise the young Shakespeare.²⁷² Four years after Shakespeare obtained his marriage licence, a 'survei of the state of the ministerie in Warwickshire' was compiled probably by Thomas Cartwright and his close associates and under the auspices of local reformers including a 'puritan controversialist', Job Throckmorton (1545–1601), who sat in Parliament as member for Warwick in 1586–7.²⁷³ It was part of a wider survey drawn up for Parliament and dated 2 November 1586. It reports 'how miserable the state of the Church is for want of a godlie learned ministerie thorow out [*sic*] this Realme',

²⁷¹ Worcestershire Record Office, b716, Registers of the Bishops of Worcester, 093 BA 2648 Parcel 10. Facsimiles of the entry are printed in *Documentary Life*, p. 62 and in Holden, *William Shakespeare: His Life and Work* (London: Little Brown, 1999), p. 66. Many facsimiles in Holden's biography, including Shakespeare's marriage licence, are too small for reading. The entry is transcribed in *Minutes and Accounts*, III: 1577–1586, p. 111; Chambers, *Facts and Problems*, II, p. 41; B. Roland Lewis, *The Shakespeare Documents*, 2 vols (Stanford University Press, 1940), I, p. 161; Mutschmann and Wentersdorf, p. 85.

²⁷² Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives*, p. 10.

²⁷³ Fripp, introduction to *Minutes and Accounts*, IV: 1586–1592, pp. xv–xvi; *DNB*, s.v. 'Throckmorton, Job'. Job was a nephew of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton (1515–71) and a first cousin of the Catholic conspirator Francis Throckmorton (1554–84). For the so-called 'Throckmorton conspiracy', see *DNB*, s.v. 'Throckmorton, Francis', and C. R. N. Routh, *Who's Who in Tudor England* (1964; rev. edn, London: Shephard-Walwyn, 1990), pp. 313–4 (rev. edn).

and considers the clergyman of Temple Grafton, John Frith, ‘Vnsound in religion’ — that is, he was one of the Marian priests who managed to survive the English Reformation and continued in office.²⁷⁴ Temple Grafton may have been ‘a good choice’ for the wedding, Schoenbaum comments, ‘if the couple were Catholic’ because ‘elsewhere in Warwickshire the rites of the Old Faith were suppressed’.²⁷⁵ Mutschmann and Wentersdorf assume that ‘a conforming Anglican would hardly have wanted to be married by a “Romish” priest, and for a Puritan the very idea would have been abhorrent’.²⁷⁶ Consequently, some biographers have concluded that since Shakespeare and Anne were Catholics — curiously, no evidence has been presented to prove their assumption that the Hathaways were Catholics — they obtained the licence in order to be wedded at the church in Temple Grafton according to Catholic rites. For instance, Ian Wilson suspects that ‘Temple Grafton was chosen for Shakespeare’s marriage specifically because of Frith’s Catholicism’.²⁷⁷ Holden writes: ‘Just the man to keep the Shakespeare family happy by performing an “unsound” wedding ceremony steeped in the old religion’. For him, therefore, ‘[t]he mention of Temple Grafton [. . .] adds intriguingly to the case for the continuing recusancy of young William’, although there is no incontrovertible evidence to suggest the ‘recusancy of young William’.²⁷⁸

These accounts of Shakespeare’s marriage not only simplify the event of 1582 but also neglect the custom of Shakespeare’s day. In early modern England a male was legally old enough to be married at the age of fourteen, and a female at the age of

²⁷⁴ *Minutes and Accounts*, IV: 1586–1592, pp. 2 and 5.

²⁷⁵ Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare’s Lives*, p. 10. Schoenbaum cautiously adds that ‘these are suppositions, mere guesses’.

²⁷⁶ P. 95.

²⁷⁷ *Shakespeare: The Evidence*, p. 57.

²⁷⁸ *William Shakespeare: His Life and Work*, p. 69. Holden’s use of the terms ‘recusant’ and ‘recusancy’ is extremely loose, and he tends to use them to dramatise Shakespeare’s life. There is no evidence to support Holden’s claim that the young Shakespeare was a recusant. See my discussion of the term ‘recusant’ in appendix A.

twelve, but teenage marriages were rare. The average age of first marriage was around twenty-seven or twenty-eight for men and twenty-five or twenty-six for women. If either one of them was under twenty-one, he or she had to have the consent of their parents or guardians.²⁷⁹ Furthermore, the church maintained an ecclesiastical calendar prohibiting banns and marriages during certain seasons.

This ecclesiastical calendar developed in the Middle Ages to separate times of ribald festivity from times of religious devotion, and it survived intact beyond the Reformation. [. . .] while the Roman Catholic Church reformed its calendar and loosened traditional restrictions at the Council of Trent in 1563 the protestant Church of England, uniquely and perversely, sustained the full set of prohibitions.²⁸⁰

These closed seasons included: 'Lent, a time of penitential austerity in readiness for [Holy Week]; Rogationtide and Trinity in the late spring; reserved for prayer and fasting in preparation for Ascension; and Advent, before Christmas, designated as a time for spiritual rather than carnal joy'. Lent began on Septuagesima Sunday and lasted till the Quinzaine (a week after the octave) of Easter. Rogationtide began on the fifth Sunday after Easter, the Sunday before Ascension. Easter Sunday moved on a lunar calendar between 22 March and 25 April. Trinity Sunday followed Whit Sunday or Pentecost, the seventh Sunday after Easter. Advent began four Sundays before Christmas (2 December in 1582) and continued till the octave of the Epiphany (13 January 1583). 'Altogether the Church of England marked 144 days as unsuitable for marriage ceremonies, covering close to 40 per cent of the year'.²⁸¹ In addition, a marriage could be solemnised only after thrice asking of banns on previous 'Sundays and holy-days, in the time of service, the people being present, after the accustomed manner'.²⁸²

²⁷⁹ David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 285 and 311.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 298.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 298–9 and p. 546, n. 3.

²⁸² Quoted in Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, p. 305

‘Elizabethan churchmen insisted that marriage be brought firmly under ecclesiastical control’, and Episcopal visitors made frequent enquiries to enforce the custom.²⁸³ However, the open publication of banns could be dispensed with by purchasing a licence from the Episcopal authorities. The procedure was:

to apply to the Episcopal authorities — to the bishop’s chancellor, commissary, or vicar general, or to the archdeacon or any other competent official — present one’s bona fides, and pay the requisite fee of 5s. or 7s. The official granting the licence was supposed to be satisfied that there was no lawful impediment to hinder the marriage, that it overrode no controversy or suit touching contract, and that the marriage had the express consent of a minor’s parents or guardians. [. . .] Persons applying for matrimonial licences had to sign allegations and bonds to this effect, designed to reduce the risk of ‘fraud and collusion’. As a further safeguard against deceit the canons stipulated that licences should be granted ‘unto such persons only as be of good taste and quality, and that upon good caution and security taken’.²⁸⁴

An ecclesiastical licence allowed a couple to marry in haste, when time was of the essence; it allowed them to marry during religious seasons when matrimony was otherwise prohibited; it permitted them to marry in a parish away from home in the church or chapel of their choices; and it secured them a degree of privacy, removed from the scrutiny of kinsfolk or neighbours that came with the publication of banns.²⁸⁵

It is reasonable to assume, as Joseph William Gray points out, that in the diocese of Worcester, as in other dioceses, one of the documents to be prepared on the issue of a licence was an ‘allegation, to which the applicant was sworn, stating the name, residence, and occupation of each of the parties and of the parents, guardian or friends giving consent, and the reason’ why the applicant needed to obtain a licence. However, no allegations for a date earlier than 1600/1 have been preserved at the Worcester registry. ‘With the disappearance of all the documents but the bond and the register entry was lost much information as to the circumstances under which the

²⁸³ Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, p. 306.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 309.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 309

application for the licence was made [. . .]’.²⁸⁶ Once the licence itself was addressed by the officials to the officiating minister and presumably retained by him, an entry of the licence, such as we have of Shakespeare, was recorded in the bishop’s register.²⁸⁷

Some of the early entries at Worcester are fully documented, but those for 1579–85 are only summary. The registry entry of the licence was first printed by Halliwell-Phillipps in the ‘Illustrative Note’ in his *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, and repeatedly afterwards. Shakespeare’s licence is described as ‘*similis* [similar]’ presumably to the previous one issued on the same day, which, according to the bond, was to allow the couple ‘to be married together with once asking of the bannes of m[at]ri[m]ony between them’.²⁸⁸ The licence issued for Shakespeare itself is not known to be extant. Chambers assumes that the full formula may have been “*licentia solemnizandi matrimonium*”, to which was possibly added “*cum una edicione bannorum*” since the bond (dated 28 November 1582) shows that this was the nature of the dispensation.²⁸⁹

Shakespeare’s licence was granted on 27 November 1582 for his marriage with ‘Anna Whateley de Temple Grafton’. Gray suggests that Temple Grafton may have been copied in error from the allegation, in which it may have appeared either ‘as the residence of one of the persons concerned in the application for Shakespeare’s licence, or as the church named for his marriage’. The Episcopal register in question, therefore, could suggest that Shakespeare’s marriage took place in Temple Grafton, for which no register during the period is extant. However, even if this is the case, the

²⁸⁶ Gray, *Shakespeare’s Marriage, his Departure from Stratford and Other Incidents in his Life* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1905), pp. 11 and 18.

²⁸⁷ Worcestershire Record Office, b716, Registers of the Bishops of Worcester, 093 BA 2648, Parcel 10.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 43b (entry of the licence); 797, Marriage Bonds, BA 2040, Parcel 1, no. 25. I am grateful to the staff of Worcestershire Record Office for letting me examine these manuscript sources, which are preserved separately from the other registers and bonds.

²⁸⁹ *Facts and Problems*, II, p. 44.

documentary evidence does not necessarily tell us that Shakespeare and Anne planned to be wedded by the Catholic clergyman.

The necessity for most licences in Shakespeare's day was due to urgency. In the diocese of Worcester the consistory court was authorised to grant licences. The head of the court was the bishop's chancellor (Richard Cosin in 1582) with the registrar (Robert Warmstry). The number of licences the bishop of Worcester granted immediately before and during the prohibited seasons was above the average.²⁹⁰ The record of the baptism of Shakespeare and Anne's first daughter Susanna on 26 May 1583 tells us that Anne was already pregnant in November 1582. Advent was approaching. After the eve of Advent Sunday, no wedding could be celebrated until the octave of the Epiphany (13 January) without licence. The bond given by the sureties of Shakespeare on the issue of the licence records that the application for the marriage licence was made to 'the right Reverend father in god lord John bushop of worcester and his offycers for licencing them the said William and Anne to be mar[r]ied together with once asking of the bannes of matrimony between them'.²⁹¹ In other words, the licence was issued so that two of the publications of banns might be dispensed with. The bond indicates that urgency, most likely due to Anne's pregnancy, was the reason for the necessity of the marriage licence.

Marriages by licence 'were not supposed to be secret or clandestine, but were supposed to take place in the home church or chapel of one of the parties, during the canonical hours of eight to twelve in the morning. Sometimes the licence came with particular conditions such as validating the wedding 'in any church within the diocese'.²⁹² If the wedding needed secrecy for whatever reason, the licence specified

²⁹⁰ Gray, *Shakespeare's Marriage*, p. 66.

²⁹¹ *Minutes and Accounts*, III: 1577–1586, p. 113; Gray, *Shakespeare's Marriage*, p. 204.

²⁹² Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, p. 310.

the church where the couple would be wedded. In the case of Shakespeare and Anne, neither the licence nor the bond names the place of wedding.

Duffy asserts that the record of Shakespeare's marriage licence in the bishop's register 'implies [. . .] that the wedding took place in the village of Temple Grafton'.²⁹³ But the theory that the parish in the register was entered as the place of marriage is improbable. Gray's study shows that only sixty-two per cent of the marriages took place in the parishes named in the licence entries during 1582–3.²⁹⁴ The number would be higher if the parishes named in the licence entries were places appointed for the ceremonies according to the applicants' wishes. The failure to find a large number suggests that it is unlikely that Temple Grafton was intentionally entered as the place appointed for the marriage. According to Gray's comparison between the licence entries for 1582 and 1583 and the bonds in which the residences are named, one parish appears regularly at the end of the licence entries, and with seven exceptions this is that of the bride's residence. In all but two exceptional cases the substituted parish is 'either the residence of the bridegroom or of one of the sureties or else the place of marriage'.²⁹⁵ In the said two remaining entries, one of which is Shakespeare's, the substituted parishes cannot be traced. Gray's study suggests that the terminal parish named in the marriage licence entries was intended as the residence of the bride and that 'Temple Grafton' was inserted in error.

Gray informs us that 'by means of a search in parishes named in the bishop's registers, [. . .] more than half of a certain number of marriages for which licences were granted in the years 1581 and 1582 were solemnized in the bride's parish'.²⁹⁶ Shakespeare's wedding may have taken place at the parish church of Temple Grafton

²⁹³ 'Was Shakespeare a Catholic?', p. 537.

²⁹⁴ Gray, *Shakespeare's Marriage*, pp. 37 and 227. Gray notes that 188 licences were granted during this period, but he discusses only 110 of them. It is not clear what has happened to the other 78 cases (see p. 227).

²⁹⁵ Gray, *Shakespeare's Marriage*, pp. 38 and 228–9 (p. 38).

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

if Anne was living in Temple Grafton by that time.²⁹⁷ Furthermore, if the church proposed in the allegation was not in the parish of the bride or the bridegroom, a good reason was required.²⁹⁸ When the circumstance stated by the applicant was unsatisfactory, the bishop had a right to refuse the grant.²⁹⁹ The bishop of Worcester was a zealous Protestant; therefore, it seems unlikely that he would have granted a licence if the application had been made asking that the ceremony might take place in Temple Grafton according to Catholic rites.

Although marriages by licence were by no means always secret, Chambers suggests that Shakespeare's father's financial straits may have motivated secrecy.³⁰⁰ Park Honan agrees with Chambers: William's 'scandal' could further damage his father's business. 'Among the illicit motives for a secret marriage are those arising out of precontract, consanguinity, affinity, or want of consent', and 'the second and third of these appear to have been the cause of grave scandal in the church' during Elizabeth's reign.³⁰¹ Neither law nor religion required marriage contracts. Although children were warned against the danger of 'wanton embraces, sitting on the knee, [and] bearing in arms', these were widespread practices. 'Indeed', says Alan Macfarlane, 'since marriage was to be a total emotional and physical relationship, it was essential that there be a prolonged and sustained effort to achieve ardent closeness'.³⁰² Moreover, it was 'widely thought acceptable for a couple who had been

²⁹⁷ Katherine Duncan-Jones assumes that this is the case. Fripp conjectures that Anne's mother came from Temple Grafton and that Anne moved to live there after her father's death. In the bond, however, she is 'of Stratford'. See *Minutes and Accounts*, III: 1577–1586, pp. 88 and 112.

²⁹⁸ Gray, *Shakespeare's Marriage*, p. 44. 'The practice of marrying in a parish which was not the residence of either of the parties became common after the Restoration' (Gray, p. 45).

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 15–6.

³⁰⁰ *Facts and Problems*, II, p. 51.

³⁰¹ Gray, *Shakespeare's Marriage*, p. 59.

³⁰² *Marriage and Love in England 1300–1840* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 298.

“made sure” by contracts to progress from kissing and fondling to full sexual intercourse’.³⁰³

In terms of law, on the other hand, premarital ‘incontinence’ was considered fornication and might be punished if discovered.³⁰⁴ The difficulty, therefore, was ‘to have sufficient nearness without over-exposure, either to the irrevocable step of full sexual relations or to a plateau of frustrated boredom’.³⁰⁵ Physical intimacy before marriage — or ‘holy matrimony’ as the prayer book called it — brought many lovers into trouble.³⁰⁶

Over and over again the church courts heard aggrieved or delinquent parties explain that they initiated sexual relations in anticipation of holy matrimony, but only after they were contracted or ‘made sure’. Countless couples told the same old story, attempting to legitimise their sexual activity by claiming they were ‘contracted together’ or already ‘asked in church’.³⁰⁷

Cressy’s study of parish registers shows 20–30% of brides bearing children within the first eight months of marriage.³⁰⁸

In the diocese of Worcester ‘irregularities of the kind mentioned would almost certainly have resulted in the forfeiture of the penalty’.³⁰⁹ If the court noticed a sexual offence, the lovers might be asked to apologize publicly. Marriage did not always save lovers from public disgrace. Fulke Sandells’s son, for example, later heard from a vicar’s apparitor since his wife gave birth too soon after their marriage.³¹⁰ However, the hypothesis suggested by Chambers and Honan that Shakespeare’s marriage took place at Temple Grafton (if it did) since the combination of John’s financial straits and his son’s scandal motivated secrecy is not free from a weakness. If John needed

³⁰³ Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, p. 277.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

³⁰⁵ Macfarlane, p. 298.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 278–9.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

³⁰⁹ Gray, *Shakespeare’s Marriage*, p. 59.

³¹⁰ Honan, *Shakespeare: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 81

secrecy, then a place of marriage must have been proposed in the allegation. But it is not named either in the register entry or in the bond.

The entries of licences appear to have been written by the same scribe, ‘probably a junior whose principal qualifications were neat penmanship and some knowledge of Latin’. Some paragraphs are unfinished, which indicates that ‘the original documents from which he [the scribe] was transcribing had not been completed’. It is also known that the entries in the Worcester register are carelessly made. It contains ‘numerous errors’ including obvious mistakes in names, and it has been assumed that Anne’s last name is one of these cases.³¹¹ The register also includes marriage bonds for which there are no corresponding entries of licences, and the dates of the bonds, as in Shakespeare’s case, are often later than the dates of the register entries. Occasionally, they are later than the dates of the marriages themselves.³¹² In the bond, Anne is ‘of Stratford in the dioces[e] of worcester maiden’.³¹³ Therefore, it is likely, as Chambers and Gray suggest, that the bond, as an original document, is correct, and the clerk who entered the licence made an error in recording Anne’s residence.³¹⁴

Although the bond records that Anne was ‘of Stratford in the dioces[e] of worcester maiden’, the Stratford parish register — the marriage entries up to 15 September 1600 are transcripts of the original — does not contain a record of

³¹¹ Gray, *Shakespeare’s Marriage*, pp. 219–20.

³¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 21–35, 12, and 17.

³¹³ See appendix F for the marriage bond.

³¹⁴ *Facts and Problems*, I, p. 17, and II, p. 46; Gray, *Shakespeare’s Marriage*, p. 36. Lee suggests that the bridegroom in the entry is another William Shakespeare (*A Life of William Shakespeare*, pp. 23–4). This theory has been plausibly challenged by Gray: ‘in addition to this coincidence [two William Shakespeares applied for marriage licences at the same registry on consecutive days], it would be necessary to assume another almost as curious, in loss of the Whateley bond and the omission of the Hathaway entry from the bishop’s register. That all these things occurred is very improbable’ (p. 23). Chambers agrees with Gray: ‘Broadly speaking, the series of bonds and the series of entries at Worcester agree. Occasionally, one or other is missing, but it would be an odd coincidence that one should be missing for a William Shakespeare on 27 November and the other for a William Shakespeare on 28 November’ (*Facts and Problems*, II, p. 44).

Shakespeare's marriage.³¹⁵ French has suggested that the ceremony may have taken place at Hampton Lucy,³¹⁶ but this supposition is not confirmed by the parish register that commences in 1556.³¹⁷ If Shakespeare's marriage did not take place at the parish church of Stratford, Temple Grafton or Hampton Lucy, Shakespeare and his bride could have been married at one of two chapels in the parish of Stratford: St. Peter's at Bishopton or All Saints' at Luddington. Bishopton is just north of Shottery. Although in the bond the sureties Fulk Sandells and John Richardson, like Anne, are described as being of Stratford, they appear to have been neighbours of the Hathaways of Shottery.³¹⁸ They are named together as being bail for a party in the registry of the court of record (16 April 1587): '*Elizabetha Smythe, vidua, attachiata fuit per servientes ad clavam ad respondendum Roberto Parrett in placito debiti, Johannes Richardson de Shottrey et Fulcus Sandells, de Shottrey predicta, manucaptores pro predicta Elizabetha*'.³¹⁹ Shottery was one of the several hamlets that were included in what was generally termed the parish of Old Stratford. The Bishopton register begins only in 1591.³²⁰ Luddington is a small hamlet on the north bank of the Avon, about three miles from Stratford. The Luddington register is not extant, and the transcript of the register does not begin until 1612 (according to Mark Eccles) or 1617 (according to Gray).³²¹ The curate of Bishopton in 1587 was John Haines. The curate of

³¹⁵ Chambers, *Facts and Problems*, I, p. 17.

³¹⁶ P. 373.

³¹⁷ Gray, *Shakespeare's Marriage*, p. 47.

³¹⁸ *Outlines*, II, pp. 183–4; *The Life of William Shakespeare*, pp. 116–8.

³¹⁹ Transcribed in *Outlines*, II, p. 184; *The Life of William Shakespeare*, p. 118.

³²⁰ Mark Eccles, p. 67; Gray, p. 46.

³²¹ Eccles, p. 67. See also *Outlines*, II, p. 364, n. 299.

Luddington, Thomas Hunt, was suspended for open contumacy in 1584.³²² It could thus be argued that one of these curates may have married Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway. Interestingly, there is a tradition that Shakespeare's marriage may have taken place at St. Martin's in Worcester. The register is extant, but the pages bearing the marriage entries for the year 1582 have, at some unknown time, been cut off, leaving a small sliver of parchment attached to the sewing of the binding as an indication of the removal of these pages (between fols. 74 and 75).³²³



As we have seen, meanings of the documents relating to Shakespeare's marriage and his parents are highly ambiguous. It is necessary for us to re-examine generally received meanings of the evidence. This is because meanings of evidence are not always *facts* but *interpretations*. Studies by biographers who believe the Shakespeares to have been Catholics often betray their failure to consider the full range of possible interpretations of evidence and of negative evidence. Sams entitled his book *The Real Shakespeare*, but the irony is that he is unaware that his interpretation (pp. 1–196) of the evidence (pp. 197–226) relating to the dramatist may not in fact be presenting the real Shakespeare. Sams's Shakespeare may be far from what his book title suggests.

³²² Eccles, p. 67; J. O. *Outlines*, II, p. 364, note 299. Richard Grant White refers to the local tradition that Shakespeare's marriage took place in Luddington (*Memoirs of the Life of William Shakespeare* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1865), p. 55). Halliwell-Phillips believes that the tradition is of modern origin; he comments that the tradition 'should only have been publicly noticed in quite recent years', for 'Jordan, in a separate account of Luddington, makes no allusion to its marriage tradition; nor had the late R. B. Wheler, up to the year 1821 or later, ever heard of such a belief'. Both Halliwell-Phillips and White claim that Thomas Hunt had been a schoolmaster in Stratford. They must have confused Thomas Hunt (curate) and Simon Hunt (schoolmaster). The bishops' registry at Worcester records the appointment of Simon Hunt: 'xxix die ejusdem mensis, &c., anno predicto emanavit licencia Simoni Hunt in artibus bacch. docendi literas instruendi pueros in Schola grammaticali in villa de Stratford-super-Avon' (quoted in Charlotte Carmichael Stopes, *Shakespeare's Warwickshire Contemporaries* (Stratford-upon-Avon: Shakespeare Head, 1907), p. 244; see also Gray, *Shakespeare's Marriage*, p. 108.)

³²³ Worcestershire Record Office, x850, Worcester, St. Martin with St. Peter [Parish Register], BA 3621, Parcel 1a. The Record Office has two information panels on Shakespeare's marriage, one of which reports this tradition and the missing pages in the register. See also Gray, *Shakespeare's Marriage*, p. 235.

Similarly, Conlan recites Mutschmann and Wentersdorf's interpretations and speculations as facts, and even uses them without compunction as supporting evidence to attribute *Edward III* to Shakespeare.³²⁴

These approaches cannot escape criticism: not only do they lack knowledge and scholarly caution, but they also involve the dangers of selective inclusion of certain views and exclusion of alternative accounts relating Shakespeare's life (for example, his religious view) and his works. We cannot deny that to some degree any narration is selective and biased. Yet, having examined the biographies in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, we cannot deny, either, that it is essential to re-examine the evidence and to re-evaluate accepted assumptions, as far as possible, without unscholarly bias (for example, 'I want Shakespeare to be Catholic') or already-made assumption ('Shakespeare was a Catholic'), and then to determine what conclusions can be drawn from the analyses.

³²⁴ 'Shakespeare's *Edward III*: A Consolation for English Recusants', 192–3.

A Discoverie of I. Nicols

minister, misreported a Jesuite, lately
recanted in the Tower

of London.

Wherin besides the declaration of the man, is com-
posed a full answer to his recantation, with a confuta-
tion of his slanders, and prooofe of the con-
traries, in the Pope, Cardinals, Clergie, Sen-
denes, and private men of Rome.

There is also added a reproofe of an evasions and sermon
falsely pretended by the sayd Nicols to be made in Rome,
and presented to the Pope in his Conffessy.

Wherin is annexed a late information from Rome
touching the autenticall copie of Nicols recantations.

God hath created him, and given him a name
which is above all names. Philippi. 2. ver. 9.



Wherin is
confirmed

A lying witness shall have no yuclende. Pro. 31.
An man is hee who is impudent, pulchritudo non impo-
nitur, non est dignitas? Bern. Ser. 43. in Can.

There is no other name under heaven given unto
men, wherein we must be saved. Act. 4. ver. 12.

1581

The Book is very rare. It contains
some curious matters respecting the
city of Rome. The Cardinal is a
man of great power and
influence. He is
a man of great power and
influence.



12. William Allen (frontispiece, *The Holie Bible, faithfvlly translated into English, ovt of the avthentical Latin* (1609–10))

THE
NEVV TESTAMENT
OF IESVS CHRIST, TRANS-

LATED FAITHFULLY INTO ENGLISH,
out of the authentical Latin, according to the best corrected copies of the same, diligently conferred vvith the Greeke and other editions in diuers languages: Vvith ARGVMENTS of bookes and chapters, ANNOTATIONS, and other necessarie helps, for the better vnderstanding of the text, and specially for the discoverie of the CORRUPTIONS of diuers late translations, and for clearing the CONTROVERSIES in religion, of these daies:

IN THE ENGLISH COLLEGE OF RHEMES.

Psal. 118.

Domihi intellectum, & scrutabor legem tuam, & custodiam illam in toto corde meo.

That is,

Giue me vnderstanding, and I vvil seache thy lawv, and vvil keepe it vvith my vvhole hart.

S. Aug. tract. 2. in Epist. Ioan.

Omnia quae leguntur in Scriptura sancta, ad instructionem & salutem nostram insensate oportet audire: maxime tamen memoria commendanda sunt, quae adversus Haereticos valent plurimum: quorum infidia, infirmiores quosque & negligentiores circumvenire non cessant.

That is,

All things that are readde in holy Scriptures, vve must heare vvith great attention, to our instruction and saluation: but those things specially must be commended to memorie, vvich make most against Heretikes: vvhoſe deceites craſe not to circumvent and beguile al the vvaker ſort and the more negligent perſons.

PRINTED AT RHEMES, in
France by Iohn Fogny.

1582.

CVM PRIVILEGIO.



13. The New Testament of Iesvs Christ, translated faithfvllly into English, out of the authentical Latin (1582)

‘Religious Pluralism’ in Elizabethan England

In chapter 5 I pointed out the narrowness of vision of those Shakespeare biographers who insist on the Catholicism of the dramatist and his family by disclosing the ambiguities of the evidence which they tend to neglect. They have two other problems, or weaknesses, of which none of them seems to be aware. Firstly, they seem to equate recusancy and Catholicism. Their accounts of the Shakespeares’ possible Catholicism are dominated by their preoccupation with recusancy in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and neglect ‘the significance of Catholics who in varying degrees conformed with the Elizabethan and early Stuart Protestant regime’.¹ This is a result of revisionism, which has encouraged a preoccupation with recusancy. Secondly, they seem to expect a clear distinction between Catholics and Protestants in Elizabethan England. In other words, they see Catholicism and Protestantism as binary opposites. In Elizabethan England, however, such a clear-cut division between Catholicism and Protestantism did not exist.²

J. Stanley Leatherbarrow, whose publication on Catholicism in Lancashire the Lancastrians may value, claims that ‘the Catholics had conviction and obstinacy and the evident willingness to die for their faith if opportunity required’.³ Matters were not so simple as Leatherbarrow asserts. Christopher Haigh, for example, has suggested that ‘it is essential for an understanding of these years [the early part of Elizabeth’s

¹ Alexandra Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England*, Royal Historical Society Studies in History 68 (London: Boydell for Royal Historical Society, 1993; repr. Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999), p. xi.

² In this chapter I focus on Elizabeth’s reign since the present thesis examines Shakespeare’s early years.

³ *The Lancashire Elizabethan Recusants*, Remains Historical and Literary Connected with the Palatine Counties of Lancashire and Chester, New Series 110 (Manchester: Chetham Society, 1947), p. 113.

reign] to avoid a restrictive definition of Catholicism which stresses union with Rome and conscious rejection of a heretical Church of England'.⁴ More recently, Alexandra Walsham has claimed that 'the sharp polarities in Church and society indicated by labels like "Catholic" and "Protestant" are, in many respects, invalid in the early modern environment' because 'clear-cut divisions between "Catholicism" and "Protestantism" did not pass into being in rural and urban localities'.⁵ In other words, in early modern England, the division between the binary opposites — Catholic/Protestant — was blurred or was, in postmodernist terminology, 'deconstructed'.

I. Church Papistry: Practice of Occasional Conformity

In Elizabethan England there existed a group of Christians whom puritans called church papists. Although Haigh insists that 'there was no sharp dividing line between recusants and church papists',⁶ central to the identity of church papistry was its development in relationship to recusancy. This point is best illustrated in George Gifford's *A Dialogue between a Papist and a Protestant* (1582):

Pa[pist]: Wherefore shoulde yee call me Papist, I am obedient to the lawes, and do not refuse to go to the Church.
 Pro[fessor of the Gospel]: Then it seemeth you are a Church Papist?
 Pa[pist]: A Church Papist, what meane ye by that?
 Pro[fessor]: Doe not you knowe? I will tell ye, there are Papists which will not come at the Church: and there are Papistes which can keepe their conscience to themselves, and yet goe to Church: of this latter sorte it seemeth you are: because yee goe to the Church.⁷

Gifford's tract was an attack on a group of Catholics 'who obediently appeared at the compulsory Sunday services' of the Church of England, 'but nevertheless continued to

⁴ 'The Continuity of Catholicism in the English Reformation', *Past and Present* 93 (1981), 37–69 (p. 40).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 13–4.

⁶ Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Lancashire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 277.

⁷ Quoted in Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 1.

adhere tenaciously and instinctively' to the old faith. 'Church papist' was 'a label which puritans used as a rhetorical tool, to give expression to their anxieties about the pastoral consequences of the "patch and peece" Reformation established in 1559, and to reprehend the mechanical, lukewarm piety they, together with the Tridentine priesthood, conflated with "atheism"'.⁸

The Elizabethan government's recognition of the distinction between the two sects 'recusancy' and 'church papistry' within Catholicism came in 1593 when a relevant statute differentiated between 'recusants' and 'papists'. 'Papists' now were 'narrowly defined' as those who 'had either this far complied with the regulations, or had yet to be formally convicted of infringing them'.⁹ The Jesuit priest, Thomas Wright, recorded the terms used for conforming Catholics by 1596: 'Some call them Church-papistes, other Scismatiques, demi-Catholickes, or cathlique-like protestantes, or externall protestantes, and internal catholikes'.¹⁰ 'Church papist', Walsham argues, is 'one element of a dynamic vocabulary that both reflects and generates doctrinal, moral, political and social tensions and tendencies'.¹¹

Although the term 'church papist' appears to have 'register[ed] in the written English language only in the early 1580s',¹² the practice it describes already existed in the 1560s. In 1569 a common behaviour of church papists — willing to come to church but unwilling to listen to any new doctrine — was reported in the diocese of Chichester: 'there be manye in the diocesse of Chichester, whiche bringe to the churche with them the olde popishe latine primers, and use to praie upon them all the tyme when the Leassons be a readinge and in the tyme of the letany'. Similarly, it was reported that '[s]ome olde folks and women there used to have beades [i.e., rosaries]

⁸ Walsham, *Church Papists*, pp. 1 and xv.

⁹ Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁰ Thomas Wright, *The disposition or garnishmente of the soule* (Antwerp [i.e., an English secret press], 1596), quoted in Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 9.

¹¹ Walsham, *Church Papists*, pp. 1 and 8–9.

¹² Ibid., p. 9. See also p. 9, n. 15.

in the churches, and those I [either the local clergy or the visitor] toke away from them but they have some yet at home in their houses'.¹³ Another report recorded: 'when a preacher dothe come, and speake any thinge against the pope's doctrine, they [parishioners] will not abide, but get them oute of the churche, as theis can wittnes. [. . .] and the scholemaster is the cause of their goinge oute which afterwards, in corners among the people dothe gayne saie the preachers of this tyme'.¹⁴ Although recusancy existed, it was small scale, and 'the general temper of the people was that of apparent willingness to go to church on Sundays, while clinging to their old beliefs about communion and the more superficial links with the past such as bell rings'.¹⁵

A similar situation of outward conformity took place in Hampshire. John Edward Paul's study of the county during the period 1560–70 shows a pattern of non-communicants — those who attended church but refused to receive communion. From local records, he counted 248 citations in the consistory court for not receiving communion while he identified only 55 cases — less than one fourth of non-communicants — for not attending church.¹⁶ The usual punishment for not receiving communion was excommunication;¹⁷ during the Elizabethan period, non-communicating was not a statutory offence (although the bishops wanted to make it so).¹⁸

¹³ Quoted in Francis Xavier Walker, 'The Implementation of the Elizabethan Statutes against Recusants 1581–1603' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1961), p. 14.

¹⁴ Quoted in Walker, p. 28.

¹⁵ Walker, p. 31.

¹⁶ 'The Hampshire Recusants in the Reign of Elizabeth I' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Southampton, 1958) p. 37.

¹⁷ Paul gives five sample cases of excommunication for not receiving communion.

¹⁸ After the Gunpowder Plot, an act was passed in 1606 to impose fines on non-communicants (3 and 4 Jac. I c. 4) ranging from £20 in the first year to £60 in the third and each succeeding year.

Shakespeare's daughter, Susanna was cited among twenty-one non-communicants in May 1606. It is important to note that the word '*Dimissa*' inserted below her entry suggests that she made an appearance later (though she did not answer the first summons) and satisfied the judge by receiving the communion or promising to do so. See Hugh A. Hanley, 'Shakespeare's Family in Stratford Records', *TLS*, 21 May 1964, p. 441; E. R. C. Brinkworth, *Shakespeare and the Bawdy Court of Stratford* (London: Phillimore, 1972), pp. 44–9 and 132; Milward, *Shakespeare's Religious Background*, p. 162; *Documentary Life*, p. 234; *Compact Documentary Life*, pp. 286–7.

A similar adjustment took place on the part of clergy. The prescribed service was openly read by former Marian priests who now conformed. In private, they celebrated mass, and some of their parishioners received communion at their hands according to the old rite. In 1586 Nicholas Sander wrote of the 1560s:

Yea what is still more marvellous and more sad, sometimes the priest, saying mass at home, for the sake of those catholics whom he knew to be desirous of them, carried about him hosts consecrated according to the rite of the Church, with which he communicated them at the very time in which he was giving other catholics, more careless about the faith, the bread prepared for them according to the heretical rite.¹⁹

For many Catholics in Elizabethan England the problem ‘was not whether to be a recusant or not, but rather how to live without falling foul of the law yet without forgoing their traditional beliefs’. Recusancy demanded ‘an attitude of mind which the political and theological climate of these years could not produce’.²⁰

‘Whether it is lawful for the laity to receive the communion as is now used?’ was a question as early as 1561, when John Murren, former chaplain to Bishop Edmund Bonner, distributed in the streets of Chester copies of a manuscript treatise condemning such conduct and warning Catholics that ‘in receiving the communion as now used’ means ‘separating yourselves from God and his church’ and ‘entering into the malignant church of Satan’.²¹

William Allen similarly wrote of the danger of occasional conformity. When he arrived in Lancashire, he was dismayed to find that the practice of occasional conformity was spreading throughout the county. As he wrote in a letter to Vendeville several years later, priests and people persuaded themselves ‘that it was enough to hold the faith interiorly while obeying the Sovereign in externals, especially in the singing of psalms and parts of scripture in the vulgar tongue, a thing which seemed to

¹⁹ *Rise and Growth of the Anglican Schism* (Cologne, 1585; English translation, 1877), quoted in Walker, p. 15.

²⁰ Walker, p. 31.

²¹ Printed in James Pilkington, *The Works of James Pilkington, B. D., Lord Bishop of Durham*, ed. by James Scholefield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1842), pp. 617–39 (p. 624).

them indifferent, and, in persons otherwise virtuous, worthy of toleration on account of the terrible rigour of the laws'.²² In the same letter, he complained that 'not only laymen, who believed the Faith in their hearts and heard Mass when they could, frequented the schismatical churches . . . but many priests said Mass privately and celebrated the heretical offices and supper in public'.²³

In 1562 a group of noblemen submitted requests mediated by the Portuguese and Spanish ambassadors regarding the question of validity of conformity to Pius IV and to the fathers of the Council of Trent, who accordingly appointed a small commission for its consideration. Both parties reached the same conclusion: '*non licet*' ('*omnino non licere*') — conformity was in no case acceptable. However, neither formal decrees nor canons followed, and, as Walsham has pointed out, 'subtly differing versions' were reported by key Catholic propagandists in the preceding years. Among them were: I. G., 'An answer to a comfortable advertisement, with it addition written of late to afflicted catholykes concerning goinge to church with protestantes' (manuscript treatise, c. 1593); Gregory Martin, *A treatise of schisme* (1578); *The declaration of the fathers of the councell of Trent, concerning the going unto churches, at such time as hereticall service is saied, or heresy preached* (1593); Henry Garnet, *An apology against the defence of schisme* (1593); Robert Southwell, *An epistle of comfort* (1587–8).²⁴

At the same time, a number of propagandist works against conformity were printed both abroad and secretly in England. As mentioned above, Gregory Martin published his *Treatise of schisme* in 1578. Two years later Robert Parsons's *Brief discourse contayning certayne reasons why Catholiques refuse to goe to church* was

²² Dated 16 September 1580. Quoted in Martin Hail, *An Elizabethan Cardinal, William Allen* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1914), p. 43.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

²⁴ Walsham, *Church Papists*, pp. 22–6.

hastily prepared and rushed through a secret press in London. It was reprinted in 1599, 1601 and 1621. Parsons addressed the question further in a manuscript reply to the author of an anonymous tract favouring the lawfulness of churchgoing, 'Against going to Church' (British Library, Add MS 39830 f. 14), and in his *Quaestiones Duae* (1607). Allen addressed the matter briefly in 'An admonition and comfort to the afflicted Catholikes' in *An apologie and the declaration of the institution and endeavours of the two English colleges* (1581) and in 'The satisfaction of Mr James Bosgrave' in *A True report of the late apprehension and imprisonment of John Nicols, Minister* (1583). Southwell discussed the issue in his *Epistle of Comfort* (1587–88) and in *Humble Supplication* (1595/1600). As late as 1593 Garnet addressed the subject in his three tracts *Treatise of Christian Renunciation, Apology and Declaration of the Fathers*.²⁵

The intended audience of these tracts was church papists 'who mentally substituted "Catholic" for the abusive labels with which they were christened by belligerent Protestants, but carelessly dismissed the possibility that temporising might contradict their confessional orthodoxy and imperil their spiritual redemption'.²⁶ The authors of these tracts warned church papists of 'the qualities of this sinne' of conformity and sought to save them from the 'desperate presumption' and 'perilous perswasion, builded only on their owne phantasie' that churchgoing was lawful and pardonable among the dangers of 'these troublesome tymes'.²⁷ Parsons, using imagery of disease, warned them that presence at the Church of England's 'noughty service' would cause 'infection' with the disease of heresy: 'Because the[i]r spe[e]che crepeth lyke a canker and they have subverted the faith of certayne', 'By sweete words and

²⁵ Walsham gives a more detailed list of printed propaganda. See p. 25, n. 13. She also adds that Elizabethan propagandists may have been concerned primarily with an upper-class male audience, whereas in the Jacobean period seminary priests like John Radford and Ralph Buckland attempted to indoctrinate plebeian as well as aristocratic Catholics. See her discussion on pp. 25 and 35–6.

²⁶ Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 27.

²⁷ Parsons, *Treatise of Christian Renunciation*, pp. 165–7, quoted in Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 27.

gaye blessings they seduce the harts of the Innocent'.²⁸ The writers of the tracts supplied a 'string of relevant papal edicts, conciliar canons and examples from biblical and ecclesiastical history, and a catalogue of other practical, patristic and scriptural arguments against attendance at Protestant service'.²⁹

These tracts disclose 'an acute anxiety about the rise of a faithless generation and an approaching era of unbelief'.³⁰ Southwell, for example, argued that 'to appear at heretical services in deference to the Act of Uniformity [. . .] was to collaborate with the Elizabethan government in its chosen strategy for the eventual extermination of the "Old Religion"'.³¹ They 'represented a confident conviction that Catholicism's very survival demanded resistance and reprisal' and that 'its post-Reformation identity could only be generated by disdainful opposition and tireless antagonism towards the ecclesiastical status quo'.³² Recusants were, in the Protestant preacher Perceval Wiburn's words, 'Puritan Catholikes of the hotter and better sort'.³³

Such anxiety was still clear as late as 1596. On 10 December Henry Garnet wrote to Claudius Aquaviva, vicar general of the Society of Jesus (from 1581 to 1615):

*dum Presbyteri quidam defendere ausi sunt illicitam conventiculorum
haereticorum frequentationem: idque post sanctissimi Domini Nostri Clementis
expressam definitionem vivae vocis oraculo Illustrissimo Cardinale Allano datum.*

[there are some priests who dared to justify attendance at heretical service, although this is forbidden, as had been indeed expressly defined in a reply by word of mouth given by our most holy Lord, Clement, to the Illustrious Cardinal Allen.]³⁴

Walker argues that church papistry was 'not a position that had been thought out, either by their former pastors or by themselves'. It was 'one they had stumbled

²⁸ Parsons, *Brief Discours[e]*, 7r (see also 6r ff.), quoted in Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 28.

²⁹ Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 27. These proofs were routinely used in later tracts.

³⁰ Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 43.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

³³ *A checke or reproofe of M. Howlets* (London, 1581), quoted in Walsham, p. 44.

³⁴ *The Wisbech Stirs, 1595–1598*, ed. by P. Renold, Catholic Record Society Publications 51 (London: R. H. Johns for Catholic Record Society, 1958), pp. 200 and 203.

into, all the time awaiting another change in their favour, and not sensing how far they were drifting towards inner assent'.³⁵ However, evidence suggests otherwise. In December 1580 an anonymous manuscript 'A discourse delivered to Mr. Sheldon, to persuade him to conform. Arguments to prove it lawful for a Roman Catholic to attend the Protestant service' were circulated in various gaols, declaring that under duress it was not a mortal sin to attend Protestant services.³⁶ The manuscript was widely attributed to Alban Langdale, the deprived archdeacon of Chichester, and resident chaplain to Anthony Brown, Lord Montagu of Sussex.³⁷ The author, Walsham notes, was not an 'energetic "opponent" of recusancy, but a casuist, conscious that "circumstances do alter cases" and "re[a]ddy to y[i]elde to the better Judgment" of a higher authority'.³⁸ He asserted that 'the bare goinge and naked corporall presence' at protestant services was in its 'owen nature' faultless or indifferent.³⁹ 'Although martyrdom and open profession of the faith was incumbent on bishops, priests and magistrates by virtue of their vocation, it was, by contrast, a work of supererogation in the laity. [. . .] In Langdale's eyes, the spiritual responsibility of public "confession" still lay primarily with a clerical and monastic elite'.⁴⁰ He insisted that lay Catholics should 'take out a lesson not to be bussye in exasperatinge our adversaries' and that it should not be mandatory for them to follow the practice of recusancy.⁴¹

Langdale was not alone in considering recusancy an unwise, unpractical doctrine. After serving as an ecclesiastical diplomat and penitentiary in Rome and Loreto, Thomas Langdale, Jesuit nephew of Alban Langdale, returned to England by

³⁵ Walker, p. 31.

³⁶ *CSP, Domestic, 1547–1580*, vol. 144, number 69.

³⁷ There is some doubt as to the authorship. See Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 51, n. 5.

³⁸ Walsham, *Church Papists*, pp. 51–2.

³⁹ Quoted in Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 52.

⁴⁰ Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 52.

⁴¹ Quoted in Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 52.

1583 and began to sanction not only occasional conformity but reception of the reformed Eucharist. Robert Pursglove, former bishop of Hull, similarly maintained that churchgoing was lawful if performed for the sake of secular loyalty to the crown. Returning from Rome in 1579, Thomas Bell was at work in Lancashire. In the early 1590s he circulated a series of manuscript tracts condoning occasional conformity. William Allen wrote to Fr. James Tyrie from Rome sometime between May and September 1593:

Id quod de quodam Bello obscure insinuat, ita habet: Docuit ille cum adhuc pro Catholico haberi voluit, ecclesias haereticorum sine peccato adiri posse, et multos in eam sententiam duxit.

[What he [Henry Garnet] insinuates obscurely concerning a certain Bell is as follows: he, up to the present, wishes to be accounted a Catholic, taught that the heretics' churches could be attended without sin, and led many to accept this opinion.]⁴²

Richard Verstegan reported to Parsons from Antwerp on 15 October 1592 that '[s]ome supposed Papistes upon this late presequution have published a pamphlet that it is lawful for Catholiques to go to the churches of Protestantes'. Three days later he sent a similar letter to Roger Baynes. A letter he wrote to Parsons on 1 April 1593 informs us that the pamphlet in question was written by Bell.⁴³

By 1593 Bell had written a number of tracts on the issue. He borrowed and elaborated the arguments developed by Alban Langdale and Robert Pursglove, whom he considered previous supporters of his doctrine. Restating Langdale's thesis that the Act of Uniformity was devised merely to test temporal loyalty, he declared that the underlying intention of the act was (in Alexandra Walsham's précis) 'the extraction of

⁴² *Letters of William Allen and Richard Barret, 1572–1598*, ed. by P. Renold, Catholic Record Society Publications (Records Series) 58 (Oxford: Oxonian Press for Catholic Record Society, 1967), pp. 231–2 (Renold's translation).

⁴³ *The Letter and Despatches of Richard Vestegan (c. 1550–1640)*, ed. by Anthony G. Petti, Catholic Record Society Publications 52 (London: R. H. John for Catholic Record Society, 1959), pp. 79, 83, and 114.

civil allegiance rather than theological consent’;⁴⁴ in this respect, he reasoned, Catholics could satisfy the Queen by attending services of the Church of England. He also underlined ‘the honest and commendable intention of devout Catholics who yield to comply with the adversary’ in order to protect their families and preserve their properties as ‘the resources of a future regime’.⁴⁵ More originally, Bell revived the fifteenth-century Pope Martin V’s bull *Ad evitanda*, ‘which had ordained that Christians were not bound to abstain and separate themselves, even at times of divine service, from persons collectively, as opposed to personally excommunicated by ecclesiastical decree’. Although his tracts admitted that recusancy was a more perfect path, Bell argued that the bull beyond doubt justified the practices of English church papists.⁴⁶

There is no doubt that between 1591 and 1593 Bell’s advocacy caused much trouble. In his ‘Answer to a comfortable advertisement’, not only did I. G. cynically scorn his ‘lovelye conceite’, but he also furiously attacked Bell’s ‘childishe evasion’ with a biblical analogy: not only were Bell and his followers living in a ‘foolishe paradise’, but their belief was plotted by the Devil in order to lead faithful Catholics into the ‘fylthye puddle of schisme’. I. G.’s tract reveals his fear that Bell’s ‘plausible advice’ might ‘pervert the simple and ignorant’ and that the English laity was ‘in danger to be blowne out of godes churche’. If he has ‘any sparckle of the sense of god and humilitye’, said I. G., Bell should abandon his teaching and return to recusancy.⁴⁷ If he refused, ‘the time for discreet and friendly remonstracion would pass, and he would be pulled down from his pillar and cut off’.⁴⁸ Over a decade later Sir Francis

⁴⁴ Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 57.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 56–7.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁴⁷ Quoted in Walsham, *Church Papists*, pp. 58 and 59.

⁴⁸ Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 59.

Walsingham recorded that a rumour started in England that Bell was excommunicated publicly by authority of the pope.⁴⁹

Similar doubts about the necessity of recusancy were expressed by other priests.⁵⁰ Even Allen was aware that the uncompromising imposition of recusancy might make church papists fall into heretics' hands rather than return to the old faith. He judged that 'how warely soever they [priests] walke, except they followe a little the fantasyes of their favours and followers or bere more or lesse with there schisme or synne, and be content cunningly to convey the matter so that they may serve the one side without the offence of the other [. . .] they shall not possibly gaine the favour and good word of the world'.⁵¹ He recommended that priests should learn 'howe and where to condescende without synne to certaine feablenesse growne in manns lyfe and manners these ill tymes, not always to be rigorous, never over scrupulous, so that the church discipline be not evidently infringed, nor no acte of schisme or synne plainly committed'.⁵² They were required to be sensitive about a balance at their own discretion.

By the end of the sixteenth century, church papists were 'a clerically acknowledged sector of the Catholic community', and recusancy became 'an impractical idealism'.⁵³ As Walsham argues:

grounding acceptance of occasional conformity as an adequate mark of commitment to the 'Old Religion' did not signal final resignation to the permanent status of a dissenting minority and oppressed sect. On the contrary, covert accommodation of the church papist was one manifestation of the adaptability of Counter Reformation activists still clinging optimistically to the vision of a restored Church. It was both a temporary necessity and a political strategy to ensure the survival and to preserve the resilience of a healthy and

⁴⁹ Quoted in Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 59. Both Allen and Garnet claimed that the rumour was nothing but 'figmentum [figment, fiction]' (Allen, *Letters of William Allen and Richard Barret, 1572–1598*, p. 231).

⁵⁰ P. Renold lists those priests in *The Wisbech Stirs*, p. 205, n. 6.

⁵¹ William Allen, *The Letters and Memorials of William Cardinal Allen (1532–1594)*, ed. by Fathers of the Congregation of the London Oratory (London: Wertheimer, 1882), pp. 31–2.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁵³ Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 70.

wealthy Catholic body — to maximise its potential for the complete recovery of institutional and social control.⁵⁴

Church papistry was ‘a calculated measure of submission’ to the Protestant regime.⁵⁵

The seventeenth-century divine, Thomas Cooper, identified church papists as ‘the most dangerous subject[s] the Land hath’.⁵⁶ John Gerard, travelling in England in the late sixteenth century to reconcile Protestants and schismatics, reported that many Catholics practised their religion ‘precisely’ only when circumstances permitted: ‘People of this kind come into the church without difficulty, but they fall away the moment persecution blows up. When the alarm is over, they come back again’.⁵⁷

Abstention from holy communion — a sacramental rite which the laity was required to participate in three times a year — was another strategy of church papistry. As we have seen, non-communicating was not a statutory offence in the Elizabethan period, and the usual punishment was excommunication. It was a widespread practice in the 1560s and 1570s and was ‘effective not least because it was often indistinguishable from innocuous residual folk practices and the behaviour of religious radicals at the other extreme’.⁵⁸ According to Walsham:

Non-communicating [. . .] progressively acquired public, Protestant recognition as a ‘popish’ pestilence that demanded eradication or containment as urgently as recusancy itself. [. . .] Elizabeth’s bishops were particularly active, if unsuccessful, in promoting bills in the House of Lords to unite communion with church attendance as the accepted meaning of ‘conformity’, and they continued to strike at this class of church papists through the High Commission.⁵⁹

As early as 1577 John Aylmer, bishop of London, was conferring with Sir Francis Walsingham concerning the imposition of fines ‘for contemptuouse refusinge of receavinge the communion’, and the Privy Council’s investigations in 1586 revealed

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 70.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 75.

⁵⁶ Thomas Cooper, *The cry and revenge of blood* (London, 1620), STC 5698, p. 26.

⁵⁷ *John Gerard: Autobiography of an Elizabethan*, trans. by Philip Caraman (London: Longmans, 1951), pp. 32–3.

⁵⁸ Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 85–7.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 87.

that there were 'manie papistes in diverse counties which come to church but rece[i]ve not'.⁶⁰

Statutes and proclamations were designed to detect recusants, but not church papists. The acts of 1581, 1587 and 1593 aimed at eliminating nonconformity by exacting monthly £20 fines and sequestrating land in the case of defaults. Elizabeth, as we shall see shortly, vetoed the efforts of her bishops and the parliaments of 1571, 1576 and 1581 to delve beyond 'the externall and outward shewe' to 'the very secretes of the h[e]arte in God's cause'.⁶¹ Churchgoing thus remained the touchstone of loyalty, and the Catholic polemicist, Thomas Hill, therefore, called it 'Parliamentarie Religion'.⁶² Church papistry presented a political discourse of non-resistance.⁶³

II. Casuistry

In Elizabethan England there existed another aspect that helped to blur the division between Catholicism and Protestantism — so-called 'casuistry'. From *casus* ('having turned out or come to pass in a specified manner or with a specified result'), the past participle of the Latin verb *cado*, casuistry was a 'method of moral reasoning that incorporates the particularity of a situation [or 'case'] and its attendant circumstances through a short narrative depiction'.⁶⁴ In continental Europe, the method was considerably popular among Roman Catholics from the early sixteenth to the mid-

⁶⁰ Quoted in Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 88.

⁶¹ Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 12.

⁶² Thomas Hill, *A Quartron of reasons of Catholike religion* (Antwerp [i.e., English Secret Press], 1600), p. 14, quoted in Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 12.

⁶³ The canons of 1604 instructed vicars and curates to identify in their parishes not only 'Popish recusants' but also the 'popishly given' (who, though they come to the church, yet do refuse to receive communion). '[S]et down their names', vicars and curates were told, 'distinguishing the absolute recusants from half recusants' (Edward Cardwell, ed., *Synodalia: A Collection of Articles of Religion, Canons, and Proceedings of Convocations in the Province of Canterbury, from the Year 1547 to the Year 1717*, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1842), I, p. 311). The statute of 1606 redefined 'recusants' to embrace non-communicating church papists.

⁶⁴ *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Reformation*, ed. by Hans J. Hillerbrand and others, 4 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), s.v. 'casuistry' (I, p. 272); *The Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), s.v. 'cado', 17.

seventeenth century.⁶⁵ The study of cases of conscience at the seminaries formed an important part of the training of missionary priests. At Douai-Rheims the principal text which authorities used were the *Enchiridion* of Martín de Azpilcueta (also known as Navarrus), a work first published in Latin in about 1575, and the *Summa* of Thomas de Vio (Cajetan), a slightly older work. These general works, however, did not deal specifically with the moral issues and circumstances which might face missionary priests in England. Manuals were drawn up to instruct missionaries how to deal with situations which they would encounter when they came to England. According to Allen:

examinantur casus qui frequentius occurrent in Anglia, et illinc vel aliunde interrogantur; et referuntur in unum librum ex quo vel leguntur vel etiam describuntur a sacerdotibus mox mittendis [. . .]

[the cases which occur more (rather) frequently in England, and are investigated there or elsewhere, are examined; and they are brought together in one book from which they are read or even copied by priests who are soon to be sent . . .]⁶⁶

The authorities were moved by two considerations when they drew up these cases:

‘the obligation on Catholics to avoid heresy and shun heretics as excommunicates and enemies of the faith’ and ‘the need for Catholics to adapt themselves to the situation in England in order to survive’.⁶⁷ The clear ‘interplay’ of these two considerations appears in the two booklets of cases compiled for the instruction and use of trainee priests in the late 1570s and the early 1580s.

The earlier ‘Douai-Rheims’ cases were first discussed at the seminary which was then at Rheims, in 1578 and 1579, and later, as Allen mentions, were arranged into a book for use by seminarists preparing to go on the English mission. Since Richard Bristow (1538–1581) and afterwards Lawrence Webbe taught casuistry at the

⁶⁵ In Britain the reformers used it to instruct their members on the formation of a right conscience.

⁶⁶ Allen, *The Letters and Memorials of William Cardinal Allen (1532–1594)*, p. 66 (with my translation).

⁶⁷ P. J. Holmes, introduction to *Elizabethan Casuistry*, Catholic Record Society Publications 67 (Thetford: Lowe & Brydone for Catholic Record Society, 1981), pp. 1–2.

college, they, as well as Allen, may have contributed to the discussion of these cases.⁶⁸ Another booklet was composed about a decade later, which gives not one but two resolutions for each case, and the final (and usually rather brief) resolutions at the end of each case are attributed to Allen and Parsons. Protestant sources suggest that Gregory Martin was another co-author.⁶⁹ Although Parsons, in his memoirs, refers to his writing of 'the particular cases for England to be discussed for that mission' between 1578 and 1580, Peter Holmes suggests that these cases must have been written after the anti-recusant legislation of 1581. Parsons returned to the Continent at various times after 1582. Martin died in 1582, and the document is referred to on the title-page of Thomas Bilson's *Trve difference between Christian svbiection and uncristian rebellion*, published in 1585.⁷⁰

Although the need for separation from Protestants appears to be stressed more strongly, especially in the Douai-Rheims cases, and the casuists in no way denied that nonconformity was the ultimate duty of Catholics, 'the contrary impulse towards accommodation to the existing situation in order to survive' plays an important role in both the Douai-Rheims and the Allen-Parsons cases. They 'reflected an unmistakable element of clerical indulgence towards a large body of individuals understandably hesitant to embrace a stance involving harassment and hardship, pecuniary loss and persecution'.⁷¹

⁶⁸ While studying at Oxford, Bristow and Campion were 'the two brightest men of the university' and were chosen to entertain Elizabeth with a public disputation on her visit to Oxford on 3 September 1566 (*DNB*, s.v. 'Bristow, Richard'). Three manuscript sources have survived until today: Bodleian, MS Rawlinson D 1351, ff. 4–23v; MS 484 (pp. 408–26) at the Bibliothèque Municipale of Douai; and Bodleian, MS Jones 53, ff. 239–53v.

⁶⁹ Holmes, introduction to *Elizabethan Casuistry*, p. 8 (see also n. 55).

⁷⁰ *Trve difference between Christian svbiection and uncristian rebellion* (Oxford, 1585), STC 3071. The prefatory matter on the title-page reads: 'With a demonstration that the thinges reformed [*sic*] in the Church of England by the Lawes of this Realme are truely Catholike, notwithstanding the vaine shew made to the contrary in their late Rhemish Testament'.

⁷¹ Walsham, *Church Papist*, p. 64.

Occasional conformity to the re-established Church is approved, especially in the collection of later cases, which dates probably after 1581 when the monthly fine of £20 for recusancy was introduced (Allen-Parsons, chapter 2, part 1, case 19).

Assuming that Catholics were obliged to avoid heretical churches and sermons only by human law, the casuists 'invoked standard casuistical principles to pronounce papal dispensation for outward conformity a genuine possibility'.⁷² Even the collection of earlier cases allowed a nobleman or noblewoman to accompany the Queen to chapels while acting as a courtier in attendance upon her, and said that servants could also accompany their masters to church in the same spirit (Douai-Rheims, cases 16 and 18). The conformity of the Syrian military commander and leper Naaman (see 2 Kings 5) was acknowledged as a precedent both in the earlier and in the later cases.

It was also decided at Rheims that attendance at services of the established Church might be justified to a certain extent by fear of persecution and that those who went to church for this reason were not to be considered schismatics (Douai-Rheims, cases B8 and 12). In the Allen-Parsons cases, the casuists gave a defence of occasional conformity 'on the *practical* ground that it protected the Catholic community from the loss of its richest and most powerful members' and declared that 'many of those who go to heretic churches at present in England, not only among the Catholics but even among the heretics are Catholics and most Catholic' (Allen-Parsons, chapter 1, case 6; chapter 2, part 1, cases 4, 14 and 18; chapter 2, part 2, case 26).⁷³ The casuists also allowed the Catholic laity in the practical interests of survival to bend 'the uncompromising strictures' requiring separation from Protestants and resistance to the Elizabethan settlement.⁷⁴ Catholics may break the fast when travelling with Protestants or staying in an inn if they have to do so to avoid detection (Douai-

⁷² Ibid., p. 64. See the preface to the Allen-Parsons cases in *Elizabethan Casuistry*, p. 61–2.

⁷³ Holmes, introduction to *Elizabethan Casuistry*, p. 3 (emphasis added).

⁷⁴ Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 63.

Rheims, case F5; Allen-Parsons, chapter 1, case 4). In the same circumstances Catholics (whether clergy or laity) may join in a Protestant grace and other Protestant prayers, and may remain silent when the Protestants utter blasphemies against God, the Pope, the Saints and the Roman Church (Douai-Rheims, case I1; Allen-Parsons, chapter 1, cases 5 and 6). Catholic servants of Protestant masters and Catholic wives of Protestant husbands may perform various Protestant services for them (Allen-Parsons, chapter 2, part 2, case 22). Catholics may use legal documents which contain or suggest royal ecclesiastical supremacy in the Queen's title given at the head of documents (Douai-Rheims, case I9; Allen-Parsons, chapters, part 2, case 28).

The contributors to the Allen-Parsons cases allude to Martin V's *Ad evitauda*, as did Bell in England. They noted that it was unlikely that convinced Catholics would be infected by witnessing Protestant worship. As to the question of the allegiance of Catholics to the Queen, the casuists invoke the doctrine of political non-resistance.⁷⁵ To the question of whether the Queen can be deposed by the pope or not, the Douai-Rheims collection teaches priests to answer in a shrewd, evasive fashion: 'I cannot answer this question unless you first decide whether she has committed a crime worthy of deposition, who is her judge and what are her crimes', for 'unless these things are certain the question is captious because it is not based on a sure foundation' (J2). The Allen-Parsons collection, on the other hand, gives an affirmative answer, but at the same time it warns priests that 'there is a further comment on this case which must be given in secret' (chapter 2, part 2, case 27). As Holmes claims, there is 'no evidence from these casuist documents that the Catholic clergy were secretly preparing the laity for some sort of rebellion', and 'the cases of conscience reveal a

⁷⁵ See also Peter Holmes, *Resistance and Compromise: The Political Thought of the Elizabethan Catholics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

Catholic community in England which was [. . .] only interested in co-existence with heretics in so far as it helped its long-term purpose'.⁷⁶

The Allen-Parsons cases achieved 'a certain fame' in Elizabethan and Jacobean England.⁷⁷ Thomas Bilson first used them as anti-Catholic propaganda, though, according to Holmes, 'he seems to have been referring to the cases in a different *form* from how we have them in the Lambeth Palace manuscript'.⁷⁸ In 1600 Sir Francis Hastings took up Bilson's reference to the casuist cases in his *An apologie or defence of the watch-word*, and at the beginning of the seventeenth century the reformist controversialists, Matthew Sutcliffe and Thomas Morton, extensively used the cases as evidence of Catholic disloyalty.⁷⁹ Richard Walpole's *A brief, and cleere confutation, of a new, vaine, and vaunting challenge, made by O. E.* (Antwerp, 1603) also refers to the casuist booklet, identifying it as an 'authentic' copy of the cases in the English college at Rome.⁸⁰

The casuists 'effectively exonerated and reinstated principled church papists as full and respectable members of the Catholic community'.⁸¹ In 1592 a verbal assurance from Pope Clement VIII enabled Allen to 'require and advertyse' the missionary priests that they should 'use greate compassion and mercifulnes[s] towards suche of the laytie especially as for mere feare or savinge their family, wife and children from ruyne are so far only fallen as to come sometimes to their churches or be present at the tyme of their service'. The Pope 'expres[s]lie told me', wrote Allen, 'that to participate with the protestants either by prayinge with them or

⁷⁶ Holmes, introduction to *Elizabethan Casuistry*, p. 5.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9 (emphasis added).

⁷⁹ Sutcliffe published *New challenge* in 1600. Morton's book was entitled *An exact discoverie of Romish doctrine in the case of conspiracie and rebellion* (1605).

⁸⁰ Quoted in Holmes, introduction to *Elizabethan Casuistry*, p. 9. Both Holmes and the editors of *A Catalogue of Catholic Books in English Printed Abroad or Secretly in England 1558–1640* (A. F. Allison and D. M. Rogers) ascribe this work to Walpole, while the *Short-Title Catalogue* wrongly ascribes it to Parsons.

⁸¹ Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 66.

comeinge to their churches or service or suche like was by no meanes lawfull or dispensable, but added withal, that such as of feare and weakenes[s] or other temporall force or necessitye should do yt ought to be gentlie dealt withal and easily absolved [. . .]’ Although he acknowledged that it should be neither ‘lawful to do so muche’ nor ‘in yt selfe any waies excusable’, Allen insisted that such ‘compassion’ was a ‘necessity’ in England. He reminded the priests that they ‘muste use muche wysdome and muche charitie and be assured that in moste cases of this kynde *tutior est via misericordiae quam justitiae rigoris* [the way of mercy is safer than the rigor of justice]’.⁸²

III. Lancashire

Lancashire was indeed ‘the very sincke of Poperie, where more unlawfull actes have been committed and more unlawfull persons holden secret then in any other parte of the realme’.⁸³ In 1574 Elizabeth herself wrote to the Bishop of Chester that ‘such disorders found within your diocese as we hear not of the like in any other parts of our realm’.⁸⁴ However, even in Lancashire church papistry was a wide-spread custom.

Tanner MS 144 in the Bodleian Library is entitled ‘The State, Civil and Ecclesiastical of the County of Lancaster, about the Year 1590’.⁸⁵ F. R. Raines suggests that the manuscript was written by Oliver Carter, fellow of the Collegiate Church, Manchester. It is a report by seventeen ‘active and zealous Lancashire clergy men’ and was probably addressed either to the Privy Council or to the High Commission Court. Although the document does not bear a date, Raines estimates that

⁸² *Letters and Memorials*, pp. 344–5 (my translation).

⁸³ *Acts of the Privy Council*, VIII, p. 277.

⁸⁴ *CSP, Domestic*, vol. 46, no. 33.

⁸⁵ The manuscript is transcribed (by J. P. Earwaker) in *Chetham Miscellanies* 5, ed. by F. R. Raines, *Remains Historical and Literary Connected with the Palatine Counties of Lancaster and Chester* 96 (Manchester: Charles Simms for the Chetham Society, 1875).

it was composed sometime between 3 June 1589 (when one of the signatories, John Ashworth, was instituted to the rectory of Warrington) and 14 March 1590 or 1591 (when another signatory, James Smyth, had died). Raines also suggests that the document appears to be one of a series of official statements made for the government from various parts of Lancashire in 1590 regarding the religious and social condition of the county.⁸⁶

The manuscript report summarises very well the complex nature of religious pluralism which I have been illustrating. It reports that church papists ‘behave themselves so vnconformably’ in churches that ‘theire presence dothe more hurte, then their absence did’. Some parishioners withdrew themselves ‘to the farthest partes of the church from the worde’, some bestowed themselves ‘in their owne private praier’, some talked, and some scorned the ministry. Many parishioners who came to church refused to communicate other than at Easter. In order ‘to avoide the Communion at other times of the yeare’, the parishioners ‘will not be brought by any meanes to contribute towardse the provision of Bread and wine for the Communion, either monethly, or Quarterly, or at any time of the yeare at all’.⁸⁷

The manuscript lists seven ways of ‘the disturbance of the divine Service most offensive to everie good Conscience’. The first on the list was ‘the continuall Intercourse of people’ walking ‘in and owte of the Church’: many parishioners came in when the service was half done, and departed before it fully ended. Another disturbance was ‘the privat[e] Praiers [. . .] with crossinge and knocking of their Breste, and som[e] times with Beades closely handeled’. Third was ‘the walkinge and talkinge’ and ‘the Scornefull laffinge Countenance’. ‘[T]he greate tumultes’ of people remaining in the churchyard (as well as streets and alehouses) during the service was

⁸⁶ *Chetham Miscellanies* 5, p. iii.

⁸⁷ *Chetham Miscellanies* 5, p. 3.

another disturbance. They threw stones onto the leads of the church and shouted to disturb the congregation. The service was also interrupted by ‘the vnseasonable comminge of those that ar[e] to be married, buried and Christened, commonly towardse the ende of Service’, by means of which people attending were withheld from the most part of the service. Parishioners were also engaged in [c]ontentions [. . .] abowte Seats⁸⁸ and places of Buriall in y^e church’ (and graves were being made during the service). Finally, ‘proclamations of Civile causes’ were ‘som times required to be made to the Minister, som times made by the civil Officer him selfe in an indue time of service’.⁸⁹

The manuscript also lists church papists’ behaviour during the communion. Due to the neglect of the appropriate rubric ‘many notoriowse sinners and som[e] Excommunicat[es] ar[e] ignorantly admitted to the Communion many times’. Many communicants refused to take the sacrament with their hands but preferred to receive it in their mouths at the hand of the minister. They behaved ‘irreverently, tumultuowsly [*sic*], and ofte[n] contentiously’ among themselves and towards the minister on purpose so that ‘they may gett a spe[e]die dispatch’ from the church. ‘All is so owte of order’, grieve the rectors.⁹⁰

As we have seen, non-communicating was a strategy of church papistry. At the visitation of Lancashire of 1578 only twenty-nine non-communicants were detected. In 1590 the detection rate tripled (ninety-seven). Five years later over 230 non-communicants were detected, and the number constantly increased until the end of Elizabeth’s reign. The last visitation in her reign detected nearly 350, and the first visitation in James’s reign detected over 520. As Haigh points out, ‘the detection of

⁸⁸ Pope Boniface IX, by the 1392 bull entitled ‘*De Venditione sedilium in Ecclesiis Parochialibus*’, recognised the custom of charging pew rents (*Chetham Miscellanies* 5, p. 4, n. 11).

⁸⁹ *Chetham Miscellanies* 5, pp. 3–5.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8. The manuscript also reports that many people lapsed into ‘vtter Atheisme and Barbarisme’ (*Chetham Miscellanies* 5, p. 11).

those who missed one out of probably three services in a year was even more difficult' than the detection of recusants, and the 'recording of non-communicants was generally neglected'. The detection of other sorts of church papists would have been more difficult. John Gerard wrote that in the 1590s a great number of Catholics in the county practised their religion only when it was safe to do so.⁹¹

IV. Elizabeth's Policy on Religion

There has been much debate concerning the preparations for the Elizabethan prayer book. As John E. Booty suggests, it is 'most likely' that 'when the decision was made to go forward with the uniformity bill, a committee was appointed to deal with the Prayer Book'.⁹² It has been suggested, for example, that in the spring of 1559 nine Protestant leaders — John Scory, Richard Cox, David Whitehead, Edwin Sandys, Edmund Grindal, Robert Horne, John Aylmer, Edmund Guest and John Jewel — started to prepare a revised prayer book.⁹³ However, there is little reliable information to confirm this theory. Whoever started to prepare a revision, the Elizabethan prayer book was based on the Edwardian prayer book of 1552 — the more radical of the two former books. But the result of the revision was compromise in the formulas of the Elizabethan prayer book. A good example to illustrate this point is the 'double sentences with which the bread and wine are administered in the Communion service': 'The body of our Lord Jesus Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thine heart by faith, with thanksgiving'. The first half was the formula of 1549, implying the

⁹¹ Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1975), pp. 275–8

⁹² 'History of the 1559 Book of Common Prayer', in *The Book of Common Prayer 1559: The Elizabethan Prayer Book*, ed. by John E. Booty (Washington: Folger Books; London: Associated University Presses, 1976), pp. 327–82 (p. 338).

⁹³ Neale, 'Elizabethan Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity', *English Historical Review* 65 (1950), 304–32, especially 326–7, and *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1581* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1953), pp. 71–7 and p. 77, n. 1.

traditional Catholic interpretation of the real presence of Christ, but the second was that of 1552, implying that Christ was received not by bread in the mouth but by faith in the heart. The last rubric in the Communion service called the 'black rubric' was removed. So was the prayer against 'the tyranny of the bishop of Rome, and all his detestable enormities', which had been in the litany of both Edwardian prayer books. While the 1552 prayer book had abolished all vestments except the surplice, the Elizabethan prayer book restored the use of the cope by the priest when holy communion was celebrated, although the proper Mass vestment, the chasuble, was not permitted. In addition, the regime issued in the same year an official primer, which included a 'Dirige' service with a series of prayers for the repose of the souls of the dead.⁹⁴

Reformed Elizabethan Protestantism was reflected not only in the Elizabethan prayer book but also in Elizabethan visitations and injunctions. In July 1559 Elizabeth issued a set of injunctions for the 'suppression of superstition' and 'to plant true religion' along with a set of articles of inquiry for a royal visitation throughout the country. Although the injunctions and articles were modelled on those of 1547, the Elizabethan injunctions and articles 'in some respects took more account of Catholic sensibilities than the Edwardian provisions had done', and gave 'legitimacy' to Catholic practices.⁹⁵ The Rogation processions, which had been suppressed since 1547, were to be retained 'to give thanks to God in the beholding of God's benefits for the increase and abundance of his fruits upon the face of the earth', and prayers were to be provided for the occasion. In removing images, those in windows were to be destroyed only if the windows were to be re-glazed. An addition to the injunctions

⁹⁴ Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1581*, pp. 78–9; 'The Book of Common Prayer 1559' < http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/BCP_1559.htm >; Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 566.

⁹⁵ *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 588–9.

commanded that ‘no altar be taken down but by oversight of the curate of the church and the churchwardens, or one of them at the least’ in order to avoid a ‘riotous or disordered manner’ — the sort of iconoclastic activities which had taken place in Edward’s reign.⁹⁶ One historian regarded these sensibilities as signs of the Elizabethan injunctions’ failure ‘to take the more obvious steps towards a *visible* Protestant order in the churches’ in England, but altars and images were to be removed, and the visitors themselves were enthusiastic Protestants.⁹⁷

In the early years of Elizabeth’s reign, the newly appointed bishops who had recently returned from exile took ‘a number of initiatives which served to impart to the Church a character which was more protestant than the queen had evidently intended, especially in the externals of ceremony and worship’. The ‘*émigré* clergy’ used ‘their powers as royal visitors and presently as ordinaries to create a Church without crosses, copes or altars, and they made bonfires of roods and rood statuary’. On altars, some of the bishops confronted her with ‘a reasoned case “why it is not convenient that the communion sh[o]ulde be mynystered at an altare”’. She was asked to ‘tender the consent’ of the survivors of the Marian persecution who, ‘if they were required to utter their mind or thought it necessarie to make petition’, would express their strong opposition to altars. This appeal to the survivors, as Patrick Collinson argues, appears to represent a ‘victory in an injunction legalizing the *fait accompli* of the removal of altars “in many and sundry parts of the realm”, and which enabled the bishops in their “Interpretations” of the Injunctions and in the Advertisements of 1566 to prescribe a Communion-table, set table-wise, as the norm for Anglican worship’.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, ed. by Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, 3 vols (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964), II: The Later Tudors (1553–1587), no. 460 ‘Announcing Injunctions for Religion’ (p. 131).

⁹⁷ T. E. Hartley, *Elizabeth’s Parliaments: Queen, Lords and Commons 1559–1601* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 82.

⁹⁸ Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society 1559–1625* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p. 32.

Yet, on some issues, the bishops' success was only partial and delivered 'a scandalous diversity of practice'. For instance, on the matter of vestments 'they achieved part of their objective by a generous interpretation of the royal injunctions which was made a sanction for the physical destruction of copes and chasubles'. But Elizabeth retaliated by requiring the bishops to enforce the linen surplice and the outdoor apparel, 'with permanently divisive consequences'. She desired 'a celibate clergy, arrayed in eucharistic vestments, communicating the sacrament in the form of unleavened wafer bread from stone altars with the symbol of the cross in evidence, both on the altar and in its traditional place of prominence on the rood screen'.⁹⁹ In October 1559 she restored a silver crucifix and candles in the Chapel Royal. On 9 October Bishop de Quadra reported:

On Thursday [5 October] the Queen had ordered the marriage of one of her lady servants to take place in her own chapel and directed that a crucifix and candles should be placed upon the altar, which caused so much noise amongst her chaplains and the Council that the intention was abandoned for the time, but it was done at vespers on Saturday, and on Sunday the clergy wore vestments as they do in our services, and so great was the crowd at the palace that disturbance was heard in the city. The fact is that the crucifixes and vestments that were burnt a month ago are now set up again in the royal chapel, as they soon will be all over the kingdom.¹⁰⁰

Elizabeth's action was interpreted as 'a signal for the replacement of the roods and rood statuary in all the thousands of parish churches from which the royal visitors had so recently removed them with much attendant labour and expense for local communities'.¹⁰¹ Thomas Lever reported from Coventry 'that "the multitude" was so fascinated by the vestments prescribed for the clergy that they persuaded themselves either that the popish doctrine was still retained, or that it would soon return'.¹⁰²

Elizabeth had been on her yearly summer progress since 21 June and did not return to London until 28 September. The ornaments in the Royal Chapel had been

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 32 and 31 respectively.

¹⁰⁰ Quoted in William P. Haugaard, *Elizabeth and the English Reformation: The Struggle for a Stable Settlement of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 186.

¹⁰¹ Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants*, p. 32.

¹⁰² Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 35.

probably removed in Elizabeth's absence, and it is possible that on Sunday 1 October she first viewed the full liturgy celebrated in the Royal Chapel without cross and candles. On the following Thursday she ordered them to be restored. Although A. L. Rowse has followed Henry Gee's view that Elizabeth restored the crucifix and the candles as a gesture towards the marriage suit with Charles Hapsburg, archduke of Austria, William P. Haugaard argues that 'there is not one shred of evidence to suggest that the ornaments ever disappeared and reappeared in response to the political situation'.¹⁰³ It does appear that the crucifix and the candles were not restored merely for the wedding. In November — after the English liturgy had been in use for six months — John Jewel wrote to Peter Martyr: 'The doctrine is every where most pure; but as to ceremonies and maskings, there is a little too much foolery. That little silver cross, of ill-omened origin, still maintains its place in the queen's chapel. Wretched me! This thing will soon be drawn into a precedent.'¹⁰⁴

The newly elected bishops obviously could not stand their queen's ecclesiastical backwardness; by February 1560 some of them told their old hosts at Zürich that they were prepared to resign rather than reconcile themselves to this 'offendicle'. According to a letter written by Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, Elizabeth's ambassador in Paris, the Catholic Guise party in France 'made their advantage of the cross and candles in your chapel, saying you were not yet resolved of what religion you should be'.¹⁰⁵ Henry Machyn remarked on 'the cross and ij candles bornyng [*sic*]' at sermons in the spring of 1560.¹⁰⁶ In the summer of 1562 when a vandal — presumably of militantly Protestant conviction — destroyed the cross and candlesticks, John Parkhurst, bishop of Norwich, informed Henry Bullinger of the

¹⁰³ Gee, *Elizabethan Prayer Book* (London: Macmillan, 1902), p. 152; Rowse, *The England of Elizabeth* (London: Macmillan, 1950), p. 395; Haugaard, p. 187.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Haugaard, p. 185.

¹⁰⁵ Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, p. 35; Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants*, p. 32.

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in Haugaard, p. 188.

incident with the comment ‘a good riddance of such a cross as that’. Eight months later, however, he reported that the ornaments had been ‘shortly after brought back again to the great grief of the godly’.¹⁰⁷

From these reports it is clear that Elizabeth was reluctant to clear the Chapel Royal of crucifix and candles. They ‘were probably kept on the holy table, except during the time of communion when the table was moved out and the crucifix moved to a shelf on the wall’.¹⁰⁸ As Patrick Collinson argues:

The Chapel Royal was an example to the whole Church, and the queen’s gesture implied a reversal of the vigorous instructions with which the royal visitors had been sent out in the summer of 1559, and which they had interpreted by the systematic removal and destruction of rood-lofts, crucifixes and vestments.¹⁰⁹

‘If the altars of Mary’s reign were transformed into Protestant communion tables’, Hartley argues, ‘it was not Elizabeth who had decreed it at this point, but others going beyond the strict limit of their brief. All this may have been a sign of her own spiritual and religious disposition, but it meant there was a difference, if not a gulf, between her and many around her, both bishops and Councillors’.¹¹⁰

Elizabeth’s conservative policy on religion was also reflected in the proceedings of the parliament of 1571. This was the first parliament in which every member had to take the oath of supremacy. There were thus no avowed Catholics in the 1571 parliament (or after). However, ‘a substantial minority of members were either Catholics themselves or counted Catholics among their close families’.¹¹¹ Parliament opened on 2 April, and in his opening speech the Lord Keeper identified two issues which parliament was to deal with. One of them was ‘whether the ecclesiasticall lawes concerninge the discipline of the Church be sufficient or noe’,

¹⁰⁷ Quoted in Haugaard, p. 188.

¹⁰⁸ Haugaard, p. 188.

¹⁰⁹ Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, p. 35.

¹¹⁰ Hartley, *Elizabeth’s Parliaments*, p. 82.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

and ‘yf any wante shalbe founde to supply the same’.¹¹² In the House of Commons Christopher Wray was elected Speaker on 2 April. Wray, after Elizabeth confirmed his election on the 4th, ‘desired to bee heard to say som[e]what concerning the orderly government of a com[m]on weale’. His oration dealt with ‘three thinges requisite’, one of which was religion, insisting that ‘in spirituall or ecclesiasticall’ causes ‘wholly her Majestie’s power is absolute’.¹¹³ In the same morning, ‘the bill for cominge to service and receaving the communion’ was read.¹¹⁴ The bill was an attempt to deal with recusants despite the penalty imposed in the 1559 act. Under the Act of Uniformity all the subjects were liable to a fine of 12d. for absence from church. The bill proposed to enforce attendance at least once a quarter by imposing a severer fine.¹¹⁵ It was also to enforce attendance at the Communion at least once a year ‘on the payne of one hundred markes’.¹¹⁶ Although no debates are recorded for this morning, the Commons, before they rose, agreed that the litany should be said every morning.¹¹⁷

The bill was read a second time on 6 April. Sir Thomas Smith was in support but suggested that the bishops should be consulted. Neale suggests that this was ‘an indication that the bill came officially neither from the bishops nor [from] the Council’. William Fleetwood then insisted that ‘the penallty of that statute should not goe to promoters [i.e., informers]’, showing ‘the evilles and inconveniences which did

¹¹² *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, I: 1558–1581, p. 183.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 198. The other two subjects he discussed were ‘authoritie and lawes’.

¹¹⁴ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, I: 1558–1581, p. 199. An anonymous member’s journal records that this bill was read on 5 April, but from Hooker’s journal and *Commons Journal* we can assume that it was actually read on 4 April (see *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, I: 1558–1581, p. 245).

¹¹⁵ Hooker gives the fine as ‘xxx^{sh}’ (4 April), while an anonymous member’s journal (TCD MS 535, 9 April) records ‘xij^{li}’ (as do Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C 680, and SP Dom. Eliz. 46/166), and British Library, Cott. Titus F1 has ‘xii^d’ (*Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, I: 1558–1581, p. 205, n. 33 and p. 245).

¹¹⁶ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, I: 1558–1581, p. 205.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 245. Five days later they asked the bishop of London to supply them with a preacher to read a lecture for three quarters of an hour every morning at 7 o’clock (*Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, I: 1558–1581, p. 245–6). Walker wrongly dates the proceedings of this bill in his doctoral thesis (p. 34).

growe by these men's doings, wherein noe reformation was sought but private gaine to the worst sort of men'. He added that the 'matter of goinge to the church [. . .] did directly ap[p]ertaine to that court [i.e., the House of Commons]', arguing that 'wee all have aswell learned this lesson — that there is a God who is to bee served — as have the bushoppes'. He thus insisted that the bill should be committed and urged his peers 'not to expect the bushoppes, who perhappes would be slowe'.¹¹⁸

The bill was committed, and was given a first reading as a new bill on 9 April. On this occasion, Edward Aglionby (or Aglyonby) — Member for Warwick — criticised a proviso giving a 'priviledge for any gentleman' in the possession of 'private oratories'. Citing from Plato, Cicero and Lactantius, he insisted that 'all men doe acknowledge and knowe there is a God, and in this respect there should bee noe difference between man and man'. In addition, 'for the other matter concerninge the receavinge of the sacrament', he argued that 'it was not convenient to enforce consciences': 'noe lawes may make a good man fitt to receave that greate misterie but God above'.¹¹⁹

Regarding this second point William Strickland argued: 'conscience may be free, but not to disturbe the com[m]on quiett'. James Dalton also replied to Aglionby, arguing that 'the matter of conscience did not concerne the lawe makers, ne[i]ther were they to regard the error, curiositie or stiffneckednes[s] of the evill, ignorant or froward persons'. He insisted that they should 'proceede orderly to the discharge of their owne consciences' and 'let them care whom it behooveth'.¹²⁰

This discussion of the issue of enforcement and freedom of conscience gave Fleetwood an opportunity to attack the rubric in the prayer book:

¹¹⁸ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, I: 1558–1581, pp. 201–2; Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1581*, pp. 195–6.

¹¹⁹ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, I: 1558–1581, pp. 206–7 and 246; Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1581*, pp. 212–3.

¹²⁰ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, I: 1558–1581, p. 206.

[T]he great consideration [is] to bee had of the old Booke of Com[m]on Prayer wherein some hidd[en] things were car[r]ied as matters of noe accompt, and yet are indeede lawes. For [. . .] cominge to the Bushopp of London and desirous to learne the warrant of deprivation of such who refused to fullfill some of the prescribed orders, I was willed to looke on the Booke of Com[m]on Prayer. Of all things under heaven I never looked [. . .] for a lawe in the rub[r]ickes of a matins booke; but since soe it is, let it bee better seene unto, and let further or other order bee taken for such hidden matter wrapped upp in cloudes.¹²¹

He thus urged that ‘noe authoritie should be given to others in hidden sort to ordaine any thinge havinge the force of lawe [. . .]’,¹²²

On the following day, a bill was read ‘priveledginge all persons indebted to goe to church, to tarry safe, and to return without arrest, and to punishe the sheriffe for any attachment in this behaulfe’.¹²³ This new bill was to be attached to the main bill, which (in its second form) was read a second time on 20 April. Aglionby once again insisted that ‘there should be no humane, positive lawe to inforce conscience’. He continued:

To come to the churche, for that it is publique and tendeth but to prove a man a Christian, is tollerable and convenient, and not to come to churche maie make a man seeme irreligious and soe no man, for that by religion onely a man is knowne and discerned from brute beastes, and this is to be iudged by the outward shewe; but the conscience of man is internall, invisible, and not in the power of the greatest monarch in the worlde, in no lymittes to be straightened, in no bondes to be conteyned, nor with anie pollicie of man (if once decaied) to be againe raised. [. . .] to inforce anie to doe the acte which maie tende to the discovery of his conscience, it is never founde.¹²⁴

Norton opposed him:

[. . .] not onely the externall and outward shewe is to be sought, but the very secretes of the h[e]arte in God’s cause, who is *scrutator cordium*, [examiner of the heart] must come to a reckening, and the good seede so sifted from the cockle that the one maie be knowne from the other. [. . .] all suspected of papistrie might make this oath, that they did acknowledge the Queen to be Queen for anie thinge the Pope in anie respecte might doe [. . .] the very touchstone of triall, who be those rebellious calves whom the [papal] bull hath begotten, must be the receiving of the communion, which who soe shall refuse wee maie iustly saie he favoreth etc.¹²⁵

¹²¹ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, I: 1558–1581, p. 206.

¹²² *Ibid.*, pp. 206–7.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 208; Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1581*, p. 214.

¹²⁴ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, I: 1558–1581, p. 240.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

‘[M]en’, he added, ‘are not otherwise to be knowne but by the externall signe’.¹²⁶

Norton further proposed a proviso that ‘there be no Masse soung or popish service used in Latyn, etc.’ The bill was read a third time and engrossed on 30 April. It was passed and sent to the Lords on 4 May.¹²⁷ The Lords clearly made some amendments to the bill, for when it came back to the Commons, they ‘immediately sought a conference with the Lords’. After much discussion,¹²⁸ agreed amendments were made, and the bill was formally ‘concluded’ on 25 May.¹²⁹

Despite the parliament’s great effort, Elizabeth vetoed the bill. The accounts of the parliament proceedings, as Hartley tells us, ‘are plainly not full records of all that was said’. It is ‘likely that recording was undertaken on a [. . .] selective basis’ and could be ‘determined by what proved to be of particular interest to the individual member’.¹³⁰ The proceedings themselves do not tell us exactly why Elizabeth vetoed the bill. Neale suggests that Cecil and the Privy Council were in favour of the bill, and that the veto was therefore ‘imposed by the Queen in defiance of her advisers’.¹³¹

Whether Cecil and the Privy Councillors were in favour or not, it has been argued that Elizabeth’s strong belief in freedom of inward conscience appears to have been the reason for her veto. In 1569 — two years before the bill in question was introduced in the parliament — Elizabeth issued a proclamation in which she made her policy on religion clear:

We know not, nor have any Meaning to allowe, that any our Subjects sh[o]uld be molested ether by Examination, or Inquesition [*sic*], in any Matter, either of Faith, as long as they shall profess the Christian Fayth, not gaynsayeng the Authority of the holly Scriptures, and of the Articles of our Fayth, contened in the Credes Apostolik, and Catholik; or for Matter of Ceremonyes, or any other externall

¹²⁶ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, I: 1558–1581, p. 241.

¹²⁷ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, I: 1558–1581, p. 250; Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1581*, p. 215.

¹²⁸ See, for example, Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1581*, pp. 254–5 (22–4 May).

¹²⁹ Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1581*, p. 216.

¹³⁰ Hartley, *Elizabeth’s Parliaments*, pp. 7–8.

¹³¹ Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1581*, p. 216. Neale does not clarify what his assumption is based upon. The bill reappeared subsequently — in 1576 and then in 1581.

Matters apperteyning to Christian Religion, as long as they shall *in their outward Conversation* shew themselves quiet and conformable, and not manifestly repugnant and obstynat[e] to the Lawes of the Realme [. . .]¹³²

She commanded that conformity was ‘not to be in a disguised Manner obtruded and forced by outward Warres, or Threatnings of Bloodshed or such like Cursees, Fulminacions, or other wordly Violences and Practices’, for they were ‘things unfit to be used for establishing or reforming of Christian Relligion’. She hoped that her realm ‘shall certesly and quietly have and enjoye the Fruits of our former accustomed Favor, Lenite, and Grace in all our Causes requisite, without any molestation to them by any Person, by Waye of Examinacion or Inquisition of the[i]r secret Opinions in the[i]r Consciences, for Matters of Faith’. This proclamation was to be read to parishioners at parish churches.¹³³

It is not clear if this proclamation was read at parish churches throughout the country as Elizabeth ordered. But her insistence on outward conformity and freedom of conscience is clearly stated in the proclamation, and Aglionby may have known the Queen’s policy when he made a similar claim in parliament. This policy gives us an insight in understanding the strange course of the proceedings of the parliament of 1581, which issued the notorious act imposing a £20 recusancy fine. On 25 January 1581 Sir Walter Mildmay made a motion:

considering the outrageous dealings and hatred of the papistes to the prince and government appeareth so plainly by diverse circumstances, v[i]z. the rebellion of the north, the mayntaining of certaine of the rebels being fled, the publishing of a bull of absolucion, the dealing of James FitzJames in Ireland, the invasion of strangiers, [. . .] and the rebellion of the Desmonde, they nowe withdrawing themselves from the Church, the publique dealing of the Jesuites and then such sects.¹³⁴

¹³² *A Collection of State Papers Relating to Affairs in the Reign of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth from the Year 1542 to 1570 transcribed from Original Letters and Other Authentick Memorials never before Published, Left by William Cecill [sic] Lord Burghley*, ed. by Samuel Haynes (London: William Bowyer, 1740), pp. 589–93 (pp. 591–2, emphasis added).

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 592.

¹³⁴ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, I: 1558–1581, p. 528. My citation is from Cromwell’s journal. See also Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1581*, pp. 382–3 where she provides a longer version of Mildmay’s speech (cited from British Library, Sloane MS, 326, fols. 19–29).

As to remedies, he first suggested:

it is needfull first to provide for the more straight holding of them in by providing lawes for them, that they may knowe — which they cannot but see — how little the Pope's bulls can availe, and that they may all knowe that her Majestie still upholdeth that gospell which hath so longe upheld her, and that since in so long mercie they are not won to be loyall subiectes to her Majestie, if they would needes be subiect to the Pope's benediction that they may withall taste of such punishment as is fit for such persons as withdrawe their dew obedience from their soveraigne.¹³⁵

Another remedy was the provision of forces to meet any violence:

God 'hath placed this kingdom in an island environed with the sea, as with a natural and strong wall, whereby we are not subject to those sudden invasions [. . .] What the Queen's navy is, how many notable ships, and how far beyond the navy of any other Prince, is known to all men'. Land forces were also necessary, but her Majesty does not need, 'as other Princes are fain to do, to entertain mercenary soldiers of foreign countries, hardly gotten, costly and dangerously kept, and in the end little or no service done by them; but may bring sufficient forces of her own natural subjects [. . .] that carry with them willing, valiant, and faithful minds, such as few nations may easily compare with'.¹³⁶

Mildmay thus suggested that 'wee relieve her Majestie with a subsidy' in order 'to enable her to resist violence to come; which is greatly to bee feared, not in respect of the Pope himselfe, but in respect so many princes which iustely be doubted to be his confederates'.¹³⁷

Mildmay's motion was 'very well liked', and in order to draw bills for this purpose a committee was appointed, consisting of all Privy Councillors and fifty-seven others. Two bills were drafted by Norton alone: one on the subsidy, and another on religious discipline. Here we need to follow the procedures of the latter bill, for it later became the 'act to retain the Queen's Majesty's subjects in their due obedience' — 'the notorious law which ushered in the period of severest persecution of the Catholics'.¹³⁸ The bill was entitled 'For obedience to the Queen's Majesty against the

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 528.

¹³⁶ Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1581*, p. 384. Neale cited (here in quotation marks) from British Library, Sloane MS, 326, fols. 19–29.

¹³⁷ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, I: 1558–1581, p. 528.

¹³⁸ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, I: 1558–1581, p. 528; Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1581*, pp. 385–6.

see of Rome'.¹³⁹ The bill was an amended and extended version of the 1571 bill entitled 'For the coming to church, hearing of divine service, and receiving of the Communion'. It proposed severe fines. Among them was a £12 fine for failure to attend church at least once a quarter with the penalty of forty days in prison if the fine was not paid. In case of failure to receive the communion at least twice a year, fines were imposed of £20, £40, 100 marks and £100 for successive offences. The alternatives to these fines were 6-month, 12-month, 18-month and indefinite imprisonment.¹⁴⁰ The vicar of each parish was to keep a register of communicants, witnessed by the churchwardens and constables. The names of non-communicants were to be sent to the bishop. At diocesan level these lists were to be sent to the local ecclesiastical commissioners' court, which in return could act on the information received. The bill imposed a fine of 40/- for any vicar who failed to keep a satisfactory register of communicants.

The bill was read a first time in the House on 8 February. Sir Christopher Hatton then reported to the House that the Lords had a bill handling many of the matters contained in theirs. He suggested that they should seek a conference with the Upper House, and this was agreed by both Houses. The penalties proposed in the Lords' bill were milder than the Commons' in that the Lords did not impose the penalty of indefinite imprisonment. The Lords may have had a sense that Elizabeth would not consent to such a provision.¹⁴¹

The representatives of both Houses — eighteen altogether, six of whom were bishops, and the whole of the grand committee from the Commons — met several times. There emerged a longer, amended bill, but the main provisions and penalties

¹³⁹ Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1581*, p. 386.

¹⁴⁰ Walker, pp. 125–6.

¹⁴¹ Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1581*, p. 386; Walker p. 126.

remained almost the same as the Commons'.¹⁴² It suggests that 'Lords and Commons — including the Privy Councillors of both Houses — were agreed in wanting an extremely drastic penal code against Catholics'.¹⁴³ The proposal for the enforcement of communion, however, was dropped in this new bill. Yet it was 'a bill almost as harsh as the Commons' first attempt at penal legislation'.¹⁴⁴

After the new bill was read in the Commons for the first time on 18 February, there was an unexplained interval. Then on the 27th the Lords appointed another meeting between the committees of both Houses. As the result of the meeting a new, much milder, bill was brought into the House on 4 March.¹⁴⁵ It is not clear exactly what caused the representatives of both Houses to abandon the agreed bill and replace it with a new one. 'The only explanation that seems to fit the background of the detail and make sense', suggests Neale, is that Elizabeth 'intervened to scale down the severities'.¹⁴⁶ There is evidence that the Queen had been told of the Commons' bill. A state paper entitled 'Brief notes for her Majesty' contains at the end 'two questions on which her pleasure was to be known'. Neale suspects that Elizabeth was shown the provisions of the second bill, and that 'the halt of nine days after its first reading may have been due to paralysis at Court while Councillors tried to overcome her misgivings'. When she came to a decision, 'she appears to have transmitted her wishes to the House of Lords: both the expedient and the more fitting way of attaining her purpose. [. . .] After Elizabeth had spoken, Parliament might grumble but had to submit'. Neale suggests that 'the "many speeches" noted in the *Commons Journal*

¹⁴² *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, I: 1558–1581, p. 537 (18 February); Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1581*, p. 387; Walker, p. 129.

¹⁴³ Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1581*, p. 387.

¹⁴⁴ Walker, pp. 129–30.

¹⁴⁵ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, I: 1558–1581, pp. 537 and 541; Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1581*, p. 387.

¹⁴⁶ Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1581*, p. 387. Walsham agrees with Neale (*Church Papists*, p. 12).

probably reflect the chagrin of the House and the fighting retreat of its more outspoken Members'.¹⁴⁷

This third bill was read twice and accepted for engrossment. It passed at the next sitting, was sent to the Lords and received the royal assent.¹⁴⁸ The bill as finally enacted was divided into two sections: the first concerned with the work of the Catholic missionaries, and the second introduced the penalties for ordinary recusancy. By its main provision, whoever withdrew the Queen's subjects from their natural obedience, or converted them for that purpose to Catholicism, was to be adjudged a traitor, as were those who willingly withdrew from obedience or converted. The first and second bills, as we have seen, were designed as an extension of the statute of 1571 against the papal bull of deposition, which had made it treason to reconcile or be reconciled to Rome by virtue of such instruments. The statute, based on the third bill, applied the penalties not only to Jesuits but to seminary priests and their converts; it was treason to reconcile or to be reconciled 'by virtue of the missionaries' priesthood'.

The first and second bills also dealt with the saying and hearing of mass by making the former a felony (involving the death penalty) and for the latter imposing a fine of 200 marks and (in the second bill) imprisonment for six months at the first offence and the pains of praemunire (imprisonment and forfeiture of lands and goods) at the second offence.¹⁴⁹ The statute, based on the third bill, reduced the fine for hearing mass to 100 marks, and the felony to a fine of 200 marks. The two earlier bills drew a distinction between Catholic recusants and others (i.e., Protestant sectaries). Catholic recusants were to incur the fine of £20 for the first month, £40 for the second, £100 for the third, and the pains of praemunire for the fourth. Non-Catholic recusants,

¹⁴⁷ Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1581*, pp. 387–8.

¹⁴⁸ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, I: 1558–1581, p. 541; Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1581*, p. 387; Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1581*, p. 387.

¹⁴⁹ Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1581*, p. 388; Walker, p. 121.

who were dealt with at the end, were only subject to fines of £10, £20 and £40. The statute imposed a single fine of £20 a month for non-attendance at church. On non-payment of the fine ‘within three months after judgement thereof given’, offenders were to be imprisoned until they paid. There was no mention of the mandatory reception of communion in the statute.¹⁵⁰

Sir Francis Walsingham, on the other hand, emphasised that conformity in the attendance at holy communion was of little value unless it was accompanied by inner conviction and insisted that preachers were needed to induce sincerity. In November 1580 he reported that considering recusants who ‘are latelie brought to come to the church to communicate [. . .] yt is a matter which my lords (& that with good reason as I suppose) will not like of, before such time as, by hearing, they be brought to such kno[w]ledge & understandinge, as, willinglie & with conscience, they may communicate’. Therefore, he suggested that ‘youre lordships shall doe very well to provide, that the said recusants repair [. . .] to such churches where learned preachers are to instruct them; or els[e] that such preachers resort to the churches frequented by these recusants’.¹⁵¹

Elizabeth vetoed the bill entitled ‘An acte for the safeke[e]pinge of the Armour of obstinate Recusantes’ in 1585 or 1586 (see appendix A). Sometime between 1586 and 1589 Francis Bacon (or Walsingham)¹⁵² observed that Elizabeth’s ‘proceedings [towards Catholics] have been grounded upon two principles’: ‘consciences are not to be forced, but to be won and reduced by the force of truth, with the aid of time and the use of all good means of instruction and persuasion’; and ‘the causes of conscience,

¹⁵⁰ Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1581*, p. 390; Walker, pp. 121–2 and 131.

¹⁵¹ Francis Peck, *Desiderata Curiosa*, (London: [n. pub], 1732–35; new edition, London: Thomas Evans, 1779), book 3, number 24 (p. 97). I used the new edition for the present thesis, for its title-page notes that it has a number of corrections.

¹⁵² For the authorship of this document, see the editor’s note in *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. by James Spedding and others, 14 vols (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1868–[unknown]), VIII: The Letters and the Life (1), p. 97, n. 1 and pp. 101–2.

when they exceed their bounds and grow to be matter of faction, lose their nature', and 'sovereign princes ought distinctly to punish the practice or contempt, though coloured with the pretence of conscience and religion'.¹⁵³ Bacon (or Walsingham) added:

[Elizabeth's] proceeding towards the Papists was with great lenity, expecting the good effects which time might work in them. And therefore, her Majesty revived not the laws made in the twenty-eighth and thirty-fifth year of her Father's reign, whereby the oath of allegiance might have been offered at the King's pleasure to any subject, though he kept his conscience never so modestly to himself; and the refusal to take the same oath without further circumstance was made treason. But contrariwise her Majesty, not liking to make windows into men's hearts and secret thoughts except the abundance of them did overflow into overt and express acts or affirmations, tempered her law so as it restraineth only manifest disobedience, in impugning and impeaching advisedly and maliciously her Majesty's supreme power, and maintaining and extolling a foreign jurisdiction.¹⁵⁴

Elizabeth's actions in 1571, 1581 and 1585 or 1586 bear out this observation.

Elizabeth, as G. W. Bernard argues, may have had a political desire for a uniformity of the nation and for a church that could embrace all her subjects.¹⁵⁵

Neale saw the relationship between Elizabeth and the Commons as one of conflict. He believed that Elizabeth faced an opposition — a group of forty-three members of Commons named in a satirical manuscript entitled 'A lewd pasquil set forth by certain of the parliament men'. He believed this to be a list of Puritan activists who willingly created the dynamic for a conflict with the Queen in the earlier sessions. In Neale's view, these activists who asserted a political role for the House of Commons willingly entered into conflict as an organised opposition with Elizabeth, whose ecclesiastical policy was conservative.¹⁵⁶

Recent scholarship, however, has shown that the members named in the 'lewd pasquil' manuscript were by no means all zealous Protestants. Indeed, only about half

¹⁵³ *The Works of Francis Bacon*, VIII, pp. 97–8 (p. 98).

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

¹⁵⁵ 'The Church of England, c. 1529 – c. 1642', *History* 75 (1990), 183–206 (p. 187). Bernard also argues that Elizabeth 'placed secular and political considerations of order above purely ecclesiastical and theological considerations' (p. 189).

¹⁵⁶ Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliament 1559–1581*, pp. 91–2.

of them can safely be described as Puritans. Recent scholarship has painted the relationship between the Queen and her Commons as that of co-operation. T. E. Hartley, for example, argues that '[c]o-operation, not conflict, was generally the order of the day, [as] it is now argued'. Since the Lords and Commons 'needed the Queen's assent to any measures', Hartley asserts, they 'agreed among them [that] a co-operative spirit, rather than conflict, was necessary'.¹⁵⁷ As a result, the Church of England accommodated a wide range of standpoints.



In Elizabethan England, there took place a series of negotiations and re-negotiations. This view, as we have seen in this chapter, is particularly plausible where ecclesiastical matters are concerned. As revisionists have argued, pre-Reformation Catholicism did not disappear. But recusancy was not the only aspect of the continuity of Catholicism. In Elizabethan England there was no clear-cut division between Catholicism and Protestantism, which Shakespeare biographers may believe existed. Once the context of this *religious pluralism* is recognised, Elizabethan Catholicism 'begins to look less like a cohesive body of stalwart nonconformists than a diffuse and amorphous dissenting group'.¹⁵⁸

As Peter Lake and Michael Questier argue, 'doctrine' and 'practice' were 'the two concepts or realms of discourse in and through which contemporaries attempted both to characterise and control the ideological timbre, the confessional identity, of the English church'.¹⁵⁹ Through this struggle, a measure of compromise was taken in Elizabethan England, and the clear-cut division between the binary opposites —

¹⁵⁷ Hartley, *Elizabeth's Parliaments*, pp. 2 and 18.

¹⁵⁸ Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. xii.

¹⁵⁹ Introduction to *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c. 1560–1660*, ed. by Peter Lake and Michael Questier, Modern British Religious history Series 2 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), pp. ix–xx (p. ix).

Catholicism/Protestantism — was deconstructed. It was in this discursive matrix that Shakespeare was born, grew up and wrote plays and poems.

Conclusion

The Lancastrian theories are attempts to investigate the whereabouts of Shakespeare during his 'lost years' and to find out the means by which a promising young man of the middling sort with no university education entered the London theatre world. As we have seen, however, the evidence to support the theories is extremely thin, and the theories are for the most part based upon a chain of speculations. The biographers, whether Lancastrians or not, who believe Shakespeare and his family to have been Catholics have a dangerous tendency to disregard negative evidence and neglect alternative interpretations of documentary evidence. As a result, these approaches reduce the complexity of the evidence and produce narrowness of view. What is more, their speculations are often stated as facts. They also lack a sufficiently wide knowledge of religious history of Elizabethan England, and this lack of knowledge has produced misunderstanding of the ecclesiastical conditions during Elizabeth's reign and misconceptions of the Shakespeares' religious belief. These problems have created inaccurate interpretations of the dramatist's life.

We still lack evidence to confirm the identity of Shakeshafte and the confessional affiliation of the Shakespeare family. We ought to remember that the identification of Shakeshafte and Shakespeare's religious belief may well be two separate issues. In other words, Shakespeare could have been raised as a Catholic without being Shakeshafte of Lancashire. Biographers must remember that in Elizabethan England, there took place a series of ecclesiastical negotiations and re-negotiations. Through this struggle, a measure of compromise was reached, and the clear-cut division between the binary opposites — Catholicism/Protestantism — was deconstructed. There emerged a *religious pluralism* — a compromise between

Catholicism and Protestantism. It was in this complex matrix that Shakespeare was born, grew up and wrote plays and poems. It is against this cultural background that we should study Shakespeare's life (or lives).

In the parish of Southwark, the church wardens 'visited every house listed all residents, and gave each adult a numbered disc, which was collected and ticketed in the [account] book when they came to communion'. Shakespeare's name never occurs in those books covering the years of his residence there. Was he a church papist, as Eamon Duffy suspects? The case must be carefully examined, for Shakespeare may have had other reasons for being away from London every Easter, and as Duffy himself warns us, it is 'always dangerous to argue from silence'.¹

Once the complex nature of the Elizabethan Reformation is understood, it should not be surprising that it is not as straightforward a task to identify Shakespeare's religion as many biographers may expect it to be. Some biographers have used Shakespeare's works to identify his alleged Catholicism. Certain elements in his works may sound (and may well be) 'Catholic', but they do not automatically prove that the dramatist himself was Catholic. What his works reveal is that Shakespeare reflects the religious condition of his age, which I have illustrated in the final chapter of the present thesis.²

¹ 'Was Shakespeare a Catholic?', *The Tablet*, 27 April 1996, pp. 536–8 (p. 537).

² Gary Taylor believes that Shakespeare was a church papist ('Forms of Opposition: Shakespeare and Middleton', *English Literary Renaissance* 24 (1994), 283–314). His argument has three weaknesses. Firstly, as I have argued in chapter 5, the biographical evidence that Taylor believes to indicate John Shakespeare's alleged Catholicism is not as conclusive as he suggests. Secondly, what Taylor regards as Shakespeare's Catholic sympathies in his works does not necessarily identify the dramatist as a church papist; he could have been a Protestant who had sympathies with Catholics. Thirdly, Taylor attempts to identify Shakespeare's religion by contrasting him to Middleton, whom Taylor describes as a 'moderate Puritan' (p. 289). He argues that Christianity in Elizabethan England could be categorised into 'three basic varieties, in some ways incompatible, in other ways overlapping: Catholicism, Church of England [which Taylor is reluctant to call Protestantism] and Puritan[ism]' (p. 288). Taylor, however, does not contrast Shakespeare to any dramatist or poet who belonged to the second category. Without that examination, Shakespeare's religious view cannot be identified as precisely as Taylor hopes. See also Taylor, 'The Fortunes of Oldcastle', *Shakespeare Survey* 38 (1985), 85–100.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century there has been a major shift in Shakespeare biography. Not only are biographers challenging the Lancastrian theories once again, but they are also beginning to de-Catholicise Shakespeare. Robert Bearman, as we have seen, has been taking a vital part in this new movement. He will be followed by Alison Shell, who is writing *Shakespeare and Religion* for the Arden Shakespeare series (due 2004). She emphasises that Shakespeare's contemporaries saw him first and foremost as a secular writer. He 'eschewed not merely religious verse but overtly religious writing of any kind', and his 'treatment of Catholic subject-matter is more neutral than a contemporary like Webster would have made it'.³

Three more biographies, as far as I am aware, are on their way. The New York journalist Ron Rosenbaum is interested in the Lancastrian theories, and has expressed his wish to 'follow the putative route [from Stratford to Lancashire] young William took in his youth'.⁴ His aim, however, appears not to introduce a new theory but to provide general readers with a comparison and contrast of various theories.⁵ To Lois Potter, who is writing an 'intellectual biography' for Blackwell's new 'critical biography' series, 'it's clear that Shakeshafte is *not* Shakespeare'.⁶ Alan H. Nelson's new biography will be published under the title *Shakespeare in Evidence: A Documentary Biography*.⁷ Since we do not have any documentary evidence to ratify the identification of Shakeshafte with Shakespeare, it is hardly likely that Nelson would have Shakespeare spend his youth in Lancashire.

³ Personal conversation, 1 March 2001; 'How Catholic was Shakespeare?: Some Contemporary Reactions', Cambridge Renaissance Graduate Seminar (Christ's College, Cambridge, 13 March 2001), p. 16. I am grateful to Dr. Shell for sending me a copy of her paper.

⁴ Personal communication by e-mail (2001). He may have meant it literally rather than figuratively since he has asked me if I could find someone who could give him a ride from Stratford to Lancashire.

⁵ Personal communication by e-mail, 26 June 2002. His study of the Lancastrian theories will be published from Random House.

⁶ Personal conversation, 28 June 2002. Her biography *William Shakespeare: A Critical Biography* will be published from Blackwell (faculty member page, University of Delaware < <http://www.english.udel.edu/faculty/potter.html> >).

⁷ Personal bibliography page < <http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~ahnelson/biblio.html> >.

On both sides of the Atlantic biographers are beginning to put more weight on documentary evidence with which their imagination can work. It could be argued that this is a reaction against the condition of biographical study of Shakespeare in the twentieth century, including the Lancastrian theories. This tendency is clear in the studies by Bearman and Katherine Duncan-Jones. The fate of the Lancastrian theories then seems to depend on whether or not the Lancastrians will be able to answer the objections and defeat the negative evidence presented in the present thesis and elsewhere and establish more convincing theories on the basis of new evidence.

In the introduction and chapter 1, I referred to a postmodernist theory of biography. It is time to go back to this perspective. As I have argued, biographical writing involves the lives of two authors, for a biography is the life of an author (author A) interpreted by the biographer (author B). They are two 'agencies' of biographical writing. Hence, not only must we (Shakespeare biographers) labour to obtain a more comprehensive knowledge of the cultural history of Renaissance England, but we also ought to be aware of the cultural environment to which our own understanding of Shakespeare is unavoidably subject. An offspring of postmodernism, 'presentism', whose premise is that the author is unreachable, tends to put too much emphasis (as its name indicates) on the reader and reduce the author to a means or tool by which the reader produces meaning. Biographers, however, must not lose the balance between the two agencies of biographical writing. We also ought to distinguish 'evidence', 'fact' and 'interpretation', and remember that they are all subject to re-examination and should be re-examined when they are accessible. Imagination is necessary, especially for the investigation of Shakespeare's 'lost years' and that of the means by which Shakespeare entered the London theatre world. But we must always remember the golden rule of biography: that we ought to present evidence with which our imagination can work.

Appendices

A. 'Recusants': Definition and Penalties

In the course of Catholicisation of Shakespeare, some biographers have used the term 'recusants' rather loosely. They are also unfamiliar with a series of acts that imposed various penalties on recusants. The notorious £20 monthly fine was not the only punishment that recusants had to face. As I demonstrated in chapters 3–5, those biographers' lack of sufficient knowledge has produced inaccurate presentations of Shakespeare's life. To clarify their misunderstanding of religious life in Elizabethan England, it is essential first to define the term 'recusants' — without defining the term, we cannot categorise them — and then to survey the anti-recusant acts issued during Elizabeth's reign and penalties imposed on recusants.

(1) Definition¹

In the general sense of 'to reject', the verb 'to recuse' appeared in English usage as early as the fourteenth century, having entered probably by way of the French *récuser* (from the Latin *recusare*). The noun 'recusant' (refuser) is not found before the sixteenth century. The 1553 statute of Edward VI (7 Edw. VI c. 4 § 2) applied the term to persons who refused to pay tithes, but until Elizabeth's reign it had no particular religious connotation. In 1559 the act of supremacy removed England from papal jurisdiction, with the monarch becoming the 'supreme governor' of the re-established church. The Act of Uniformity restored the 1552 Edwardian prayer book, and the clergy was ordered to use this prayer book from the feast of St. John, 24 June

¹ I am grateful to Dr. Peter Marshall for suggesting that I should discuss this subject.

(1 Eliz. c. 2 § 1–2). From this date, Elizabethans were by this act bound to attend church every Sunday and holy days.

In 1561 the ecclesiastical commissioners used the term to denote a group of Marian clergy who rejected the settlement of religion as established by the 1559 Act of Uniformity (SP 15/11/45).² A few years later the term began to be used in the narrower sense of people who refused to attend the services of the Church of England as prescribed by the act. According to Sir Edward Coke (1552–1634), judge and law writer, the earliest usage of the term in this sense occurred in 1568: ‘in the beginning of the eleuenth year of her [Elizabeth’s] Raigne, Cornwallyes, Bedingfield and Silyarde were the first Recusants [. . .] absolutely refusing to come to our Churches. And vntill they in that sort began the name of *Recusant*, was neuer heard of amongst vs’.³ Coke’s report reveals that the term was at first applied specifically to Catholics who were ‘the upholders of beliefs and practices which the new Prayer Book was intended to supplant’.⁴ This exclusive usage of the term extends into the mid-1580s. In 1583 Gervase Babington wrote that ‘[i]n my opinion our recusants, as wee call them, that is, our refusing papists to come to church, doo greatly offende’.⁵

In March 1585 or 1586,⁶ a bill entitled ‘An acte for the safeke[e]pinge of the Armour of obstinate Recusantes’ was engrossed in the Lower House and brought to the Lords. It had originated in a motion by the lieutenant of the Tower that ‘the armour of the Papists might be committed to the custody of some others, lest it might

² *CSP, Domestic*, Addenda 1547–1565, vol. 11, no. 45.

³ Robert Pricket, *The Lord Coke his speech and charge. With a discouerie of the abuses and corruption of officers* (London, 1607), *STC* 5492, pp. D–D2. Coke’s speech was delivered at Norwich Assizes, 4 August 1606. The book was dedicated to the earl of Exeter by Robert Pricket. See also *DNB*, s.v. ‘Coke, Sir Edward’.

⁴ Dom Hugh Bowler, introduction to *Recusant Roll, No. 2 (1593–1594)*, Catholic Record Society Publications (Records Series) 57 (London: Catholic Record Society, 1965), p. viii.

⁵ Quoted in the *OED*, s.v. ‘recusant’, A.1.

⁶ Neale dates the bill to 1585 (*Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1584–1601* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1957), p. 99), while Maurice F. Bond dates it to 1586 (*The Manuscripts of the House of Lords, Addenda 1514–1714*, ed. Bond, New Series 11 (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1962), no. 3217).

be employed against her Majesty upon any exploit'.⁷ The preamble of the bill also made it clear that the bill was concerned solely with Catholics. It claimed that from 'sondrie examynacions[,] confessions and openn proofes made and published at the arraynementes of dyvers and sondrie noteriwse Traiteurs' against Elizabeth:

yt hathe playnelie appe[a]red that the Bisshopp of Roome [*sic*] & his confederates[,] moste deadlie enemyes to the Que[e]nes maiestie and this Realme of Englande, have by dyvers and sondrie theire wicked mynysters as Jesuytes, semynarie priestes, Massinge priestes, and suche other devilishe persons, not onlie withdrawen dyvers of the Subjectes of this Realme from the true and moste godlie religeon in this Realme lawfullie and godlie established to the supersticiowse & false Religeon now used in the Church of Roome, and withall secreatelie have and daylie doe move and perswade such as they have withdrawen from true religeon to be redye with their powers and forces to assiste and conioyne with an armye which they saye shalbe sent by the Bisshopp of Roome [*sic*] and his confederates to invade this Realme to restore the saide superstitiouse & false religeon whiche they untrewlye name the Catholique Faithe [. . .]⁸

The preamble insisted that 'greate dowbte & suspicion maye Justlie be conceyved' against those who 'refuse to comme to anye Church Chappell or other place of common prayer and dyvyne service' of 'their loyall & faythfull h[e]artes towardes her maiestie' if an invasion should occur. It was a 'Juste occasion', claimed the bill, to prevent such danger from growing as a result of 'the permytting and sufferinge of muche Armour Weaponn & shott to contynewe in the possession and custodye of suche dowbtfull and disobedient subietes'. Not only did the bill demand that 'all manner' of armour belonging to recusants be delivered to the justices of peace of the county where they lived, but it also imposed on the recusants a fine of £200 to be delivered to the justices of peace.⁹ The Lords gave the bill three readings in one day.¹⁰ But Elizabeth must have vetoed it, for it never became law.¹¹

⁷ Quoted in Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1584–1601*, p. 99.

⁸ *The Manuscripts of the House of Lords, Addenda 1514–1714*, no. 3217.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1584–1601*, p. 99.

¹¹ See 'Elizabeth's Policy on Religion' in chapter 6.

Catholics, of course, had never been the only refusers to come to church,¹² but only Catholic absentees appear to have been styled 'recusants' until the late 1580s, after which Protestant separatists — Brownists and Barrowists — were also called 'recusants'.¹³ Nevertheless, the term was still relatively unfamiliar in the early 1580s, and 'any *official* use of the term in *legislation* had hitherto always been avoided when referring to non-attendance at church'.¹⁴ Even the act of 1581 (23 Eliz. c. 1), which introduced a £20 monthly fine, abstained from calling offenders 'recusants'.¹⁵

It was not until 1593 that the term was used *statutorily* in connection with religion. In 35 Eliz. c. 2, the term was applied specifically to Catholics, clearly defining them as 'Popishe Recusants'. Protestant absentees, against whom 35 Eliz. c. 1 ('An Acte to retayne the Quenes Subjects in Obedyence') was directed, were called 'seditious Sectaries and disloyall p[er]sons' and 'p[er]sons w^{ch} shall obstynatlie refuse to repaire to some Church Chapell or usuall Place of Cōen Prayer' (§ 1).¹⁶ In the parliament of 1593 there was a great deal of debate over the application of the term.¹⁷ On 26 February a bill was introduced in the House of Commons, the original title of

¹² Bowler gives examples on p. ix.

¹³ See Bowler, p. ix.

¹⁴ Bowler, p. ix.

¹⁵ The fine was apparently introduced by John Aylmer, bishop of London, and his colleagues of the province of Canterbury (Bowler, p. xv).

¹⁶ Eric Sams and Anthony Holden wrongfully use this phrase to describe John Shakespeare's alleged recusancy. See my discussion in chapter 5.

¹⁷ The information about the proceedings of parliaments I present in this thesis is drawn mostly from transcriptions of journals — Neale calls them 'diaries' — compiled by certain members of the Commons, and some of them are anonymous. A picture of the Lords has not been reconstructed as detailed as that of the Commons. One reason is that 'the surviving evidence of the proceedings of the Lords is meagre in comparison' (Hartley, *Elizabeth's Parliaments: Queen, Lords and Commons 1559–1601*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 104. See also G. R. Elton, *The Parliament of England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 17, and Michael A. R. Graves, *Elizabethan Parliaments 1559–1601* (London: Longman, 1987), pp. 18–20 and 29–31.) In addition, 'these accounts', as Hartley tells us, 'are plainly not full records of all that was said'. We must be aware that 'it is likely that recording was undertaken on a [. . .] selective basis' and could be 'determined by what proved to be of particular interest to the individual member' (*Elizabeth's Parliaments*, pp. 7–8).

which was 'An Act for the reducing of disloyal subjects to their due obedience'.¹⁸ Its preamble declared:

[m]any unnatural and evil-affected persons [. . .] do not cease, under pretence and colour of conscience and religion, daily to seduce and withdraw the Queen's Majesty's good and faithful subjects from their natural and bounden duty of allegiance, and thereby to stir up sedition and rebellion [. . .] to the great peril of her Majesty's most royal person [. . .] and subversion of the happy state of this Commonwealth.¹⁹

These 'disloyal subjects' were said to have entertained priests, seminarists and Jesuits, yielding 'themselves to that usurped power and authority of the Bishop of Rome whereby he hath presumed most falsely and wickedly to denounce Her Majesty to be deprived of Her Royal Estate and government and Her Highness' subjects to be discharged of their royalty and obedience' to her.²⁰ The preamble concluded that the previous laws had not provided sufficient remedies to prevent the 'malicious and devilish purposes' of these disloyal subjects.²¹

'It was a penetrating measure touching every type of recusant and simplifying the procedure for conviction to the minimum'.²² The bill was read a second time on 28 February. On this occasion Francis Craddock suggested that 'everie parte of it [the bill] should be considered of, and some reformed' because the wording of the clause imposing a fine for housing a recusant was too general:

The thing to be reformed is this, the woordes of the act being 'everie parson' that shall rece[i]ve anie recusant, etc: And this the purvey being generall, the good subiect manye bee greeved by this lawe. And he that shall have but a recusant in his custodie shalbe within the lettre of the lawe for rece[i]ving a recusant into his house.²³

¹⁸ *Third Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts*, also called *Historical Manuscripts Commission Report* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1872), p. 7; Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1584–1601*, p. 280. An anonymous member's journal calls it 'An act for the conteying of he[r] Majestie's subiectes in more due obedience' (*Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, 3 vols, ed. by T. E. Hartley (Leicester, London and New York: Leicester University Press, 199–5), III: 1593–1601, p. 69).

¹⁹ Quoted in Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1584–1601*, p. 280.

²⁰ Quoted in *Third Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts*, III, p. 7.

²¹ Quoted in Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1584–1601*, p. 280.

²² Francis Xavier Walker, 'The Implementation of the Elizabethan Statutes against Recusants 1581–1603' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1961), p. 345.

²³ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, III: 1593–1601, p. 80.

After John Hele (or Hole) pointed out more flaws, Henry Finch (or French) followed. He asked ‘whether those that came not to church, by reason of misslike they had of the Church, shalbe in like case as recusant papistes’.²⁴ He perceived that although the preamble spoke only of Catholics, the clauses might entrap Protestants. ‘We have two kinds of recusants’, he said. One of them was Catholics — ‘quite opposite to us and our religion, denying the fundamental points of our faith and profession: touching these, although some gentlemen have spoken for some qualification and consideration of them, yet I for my part could be content that the law might run in all rigorous sort against them’. The other sort was separatists or sectaries known as Barrowists and Brownists — ‘openly pretend to be of our religion, but do neither frequent our churches nor sermons, nor communicate with us. These, although I do abhor [them] as greatly as I do the other sort, yet because they carry the name of our brethren and are enemies to the other kind, I could wish’ that the law did not run heavily against them. He added that he knew ‘divers godly and zealous poor men, desirous to hear the word preached and to have the sacraments rightly administered’, who resort to some godly preacher and are ‘cited and excommunicated by the bishop’s office and handled in more rigorous manner than any recusant papist’.²⁵ It is obvious that he was referring to Puritans. He thus proposed that a proviso should be added ‘that the minister of a parish not being a pre[a]cher the parties not coming to that church within a month to be out of the penaltie of that law’.²⁶

After other members spoke, the House appointed a committee. On 12 March the bill came back to the House with so many amendments that an anonymous member recorded that it came back ‘as a new bill’. The amendments suggest that the

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 81–2.

²⁵ Quoted in Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1601*, p. 282.

²⁶ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, III: 1593–1601, p. 82. See also Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1601*, p. 283.

committee considered the original penalties too harsh. Two provisions had been omitted. Elsewhere penalties were more or less softened.²⁷ Furthermore — and this is important — the committee restricted the provisions to ‘Popish recusants’. On 13 or 14 March when the new bill was read a second time, either Miles or Edwin Sandys argued that it should be directed against ‘recusantes generally’ as it originally was, and not be restricted to ‘popish recusants only’. He considered it ‘iustice to include the Brownistes and Baroestes’.²⁸ William Lewis replied to Sandys’s suggestion: ‘Not to be to the purpose of this bill in [*sic*] include any other then only popish recusantes’. Edward Coke then declared that ‘since ‘the preamble of the bill conferred with the body of the bill, other recusants then popish recusants could not be compromised [. . .] For the title of the bill and the preamble of the bill ran only against such as were the enemyes opposed to our state, adherents to the Pope’. He thus concluded that another bill ought ‘to be framed for these persons, but could not be compromised in this bill’. James Dalton then demanded that ‘recusant Brownestes [should be] comprised in this bill, as well as popish recusantes’. In order to meet this end he insisted that ‘the preamble [should be] altered’ by substituting ‘disobedient subjectes’ for ‘disloyall subiectes’. The ecclesiastical lawyer, William Lewin, supported Dalton’s view. He insisted on including ‘Brownestes and Baroest as well provided for as the papist’, although ‘whether both in this bill, or they in some other bill, he left it to the wisdome of the House’. At the end the bill was once again committed to the former committee.²⁹

²⁷ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, III: 1593–1601, pp. 70–1. An anonymous member did not always record the changes accurately (see p. 71, n. 97).

²⁸ Manuscripts disagree as to the dates throughout this session. In this thesis I provide alternative dates noted by Hartley in *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, III: 1593–1601, while Neale only gives the earlier one. Hartley identified the orator with Miles while Neale identifies him with Edwin (*Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, III: 1593–1601, p. 125, n. 621 and p. 506, s.v. ‘Sandys, Miles’; *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1601*, p. 284).

²⁹ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, III: 1593–1601, p. 124.

The committee seems to have met on the following day (13 or 14 March), for on the 15th or 16th the House was asked to decide if the bill should aim only at 'popish recusants'. 'After many wordes', recorded an anonymous member, 'the voice of the House was to have popish recusants only', and the bill was sent back to the committee on the following day. On 17 or 18 March amendments were read and agreed to. But the bill 'was suppressed, as it was thought too extreme'.³⁰ According to Neale, the explanation may be twofold. Anthony Bacon, Francis's brother, told a Catholic correspondent that many disliked the rigours of the bill and that he did not think it would pass unless they were abated. He added that he and his brother would speak against the bill. There was also an opposition party — including Dalton and Lewin — which 'had been obstructive in committee'. They 'thought the virtue had gone out of the bill by confining it to popish recusants'.³¹

On 30 March a conference was held between the two Houses. On this occasion Cecil mentioned that he had heard that the bill in question 'had noe proceedinge', and announced that 'the Lordes amongst them had thought uppon a generall bill to that purpose, including generally all such as refused to come to church or would perswade men not to come to church'. He added that '[t]his they did not offer as a thinge they had agreed uppon in any bill' but wished to know if it would be acceptable to the Commons if it came down to the Lower House. Sir Thomas Heneage, Treasurer of the Chamber, encouraged the House to return a favourable answer, but the Commons determined that it was 'not fitt to have their censure preoccupied, or to returne an answer of allowance to a bill before the bill came into the House'. Cecil urged the

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 128 and 130; *CSP, Domestic*, III: 1591–1594, vol. 244, no. 124.

³¹ Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1601*, pp. 258–9.

Commons to make a decision, but they replied that only ‘if their Lordships sent the bill into the House they would consider of it accordingly’.³²

The government had in fact started its substitute bill three days before. It passed the Upper House ‘by means of the bishops’.³³ It was then sent down to the Lower House on 31 March and was read a first time on Monday 2 or 3 April. It was entitled ‘An act to containe her Majestie’s subiectes in their due obedience’ and recorded by an anonymous member as ‘an addition to the statut[e] of 23 Elizabeth’, that is, the anti-Catholic act of 1581 which had made it treason to withdraw subjects from their obedience to the crown or to convert. The new bill extended this provision to ‘seditious sectaries’. In addition to these offenders, the bill proposed a new provision:

He that by printing, writing, or otherwise by open speaking shall deface our devine service, or shall be taken assembled in conventicles, shall be imprisoned three moneths. If after three moneths such person shall not conform himself then to be abiured as in case of felony. If he be conformed then to make submission For keeping any offender aforsayd after notice geven of the party x^l a moneth to be forfe[i]ted, except the party be committed to him, or be father, mother, brother, sister, or sonn to him that keepeth him.³⁴

From this record in an anonymous member’s journal — the manuscript of the bill has not survived — we may conclude that the wording of the entire bill was more vague than the Commons’ bill (which we have seen) or the other Lords’ bill (which we shall shortly examine).³⁵

This point became a focus of debate after the bill was read a second time on Tuesday 3 or 4 April. An anonymous member recorded that the House had spent the whole morning on this bill. Nicholas Fuller considered the bill ‘dangerous to good subiectes and needlesse for them’. He declared that ‘[t]he statut[e] of 23 [Elizabeth] is

³² *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, III: 1593–1601, pp. 151–2 and 166.

³³ *CSP, Domestic*, III: 1591–1594, vol. 244, no. 124.

³⁴ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, III: 1593–1601, p. 154. Later in the journal, the fine of £10 is recoded as £20 (p. 155). The other manuscripts give £10 (*Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, III: 1593–1601, p. 155, n. 877).

³⁵ See also Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1601*, p. 287.

not truly expla[i]ned by this law [i.e., bill], for this explanation makes sc[h]ismes to be equall with seditions and treasons, which is against the equity of the former law’.

Whoever ‘writeth or speaketh in these matter of controversy’, he argued, ‘is within the danger of this [former] law’. Sir Walter Raleigh followed. He ‘counted the Brownestes in his conscience worthy to be rooted out of any common wealth’, but he added that ‘what danger may grow to our selves if this law passe, it were fitt we considered’. He continued his oration:

It is to be feared that men not guilty might be included in it. The law is very hard that taketh life or sendeth into banishment, where men’s intentions shall be iudged by a jury, and they shall be iudges what an other meant. But that a law be against a fact that is but iust, and punish the fact as severely as you will.³⁶

Then he asked: ‘If 2000 or 3000 Brownestes meete at the sea, at whose charge shall they be transported, or whether will you send them? I am sorry for it, [and] I am afrayd there be 10,000 or 12,000 of them in England: when they be gone who shall may[n]taine their wi[ves] and children?’³⁷

Henry Finch responded. He declared that there were ‘great faultes in the preamble and in the body of the bill’:

It pretendeth a punishment only of Brownestes and such sectaries, but throughout the whole bill not one thinge that concerned only the Brownestes. If we make a lawe against Barowstes and Brownestes let us sett downe some note of them who they are. [. . .] this bill is not to come to church or to speake against the government established, [but] this is not the opinion of the Brownestes. This law that is intituled an explanation is nothing less then that it hath a name of [it], ffor lawes explanatory are no new lawes of themselves, but parte of the old. [. . .] This law beinge allowed to be an explanation of 23 that makes all the offenders in that statut[e] to be traytors. This law excepts no persones, so all are in the former penalty. And that law of 23 is for such only of the Romish religion, and now to make it include all other opinions is to make addition to it, but no explanation.³⁸

The bill, recorded the anonymous member, ‘was much in debate and so long till we were we[a]ry of it’. In the end the bill was committed.³⁹

A ‘great committee’ met on the following day:

³⁶ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, III: 1593–1601, pp. 162–3.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 163 and 166.

Uppon a motion of Mr Fuller's the whole committee assented to the stryking out of the title and the whole preamble. No man spake for it. So of went the hedd of it at one blowe. When we came to the bill many faultes were found in the penning of it and divers mischeifes [*sic*] in the law which might intrapp the best subiectes. The title and preamble being stricken out, we went preposterously to worke to make the law.⁴⁰

The bill was amended so as to ensure that 'Brownestes and Baroest[s] were thought the men meant by the bill': 'whosever being an obstinate[e] recusant should holde that we had no Church, that we had no true sacramentes, nor no true ministry, and should write, printe, or speake, etc, and perswade any men to these opinions or be at any conventicles where these opinions should be maintained, this man soly to be within the law'. The penalties were: 3-month imprisonment for the first offence; loss of one of his ears for the second; and to be abjured or to be considered a felony for the third. The committee instructed John Brograve to draft a new bill in accordance with these amendments.⁴¹

On the next day, however, Sir Thomas Heneage reported to the House that 'the lordes of the Upper House [. . .] thought we [the Commons] cared little for them in that we [the Commons] seemed to reiect their bill and had so mangled it cutting of the hedd, maiming the body and le[a]ving it no legges'. He warned the Commons that 'the Lordes were offended', and thus urged the Commons to confer with the Lords. 'This was stood upon but at last yeelded'.⁴²

Heneage's report turned out to be a false alarm. At the conference the Lords 'used us [the Commons] very honourably and respectively [and] gave audience to all our exceptions, and yielded to amend what we would'. When the bill came back to the House of Commons on 7 or 8 April, the anonymous member recorded that 'the bill of *recusants meant for Brownestes* [was] brought in question agayne'. At this stage 'the alterations were so many that Mr Brograve was fayne to draw it into a new bill'. On

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 167.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 167. See also Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1601*, p. 290.

⁴² *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, III: 1593–1601, pp. 164–5 and 167.

the same day 'some exceptions were further taken to the bill, so it was in question whether it should be committed or no'. But the Privy Councillors 'were much against the committing of it because the parliament grewe so neere to an ende as then it would not have tyme to passe'. Upon Cecil's motion a committee was appointed to add further amendments to the bill in the upper chamber. The bill was amended 'in many words'. When it came back to the House, 'none spake directly against it', and 'the old bill with all those additions' passed 'freely'.⁴³

As to the classification of the offenders, the anonymous member recorded:

The bill is intended against Brownestes only, but yet the Privie Councelors [*sic*] would not have it beare the badge of them, but goe generally against recusants as it is. In which it was generally meant no man to be within the danger of this law who is not an obstinat[e] recusant. And an obstinat recusant only is not punishable by this law, but he must be a recusant and also a perswader or a resorter to conventicles. So that if he offend not in two of these things at once he is not punishable.⁴⁴

After much debate the bill passed the Lords.⁴⁵ In the title the reference to the act of 1581 was dropped, and the bill was now entitled 'An Act to retain the Queen's subjects in obedience'.⁴⁶

The parliament of 1593 dealt with another anti-Catholic bill. This second bill was introduced into the Lords on 24 February, and its aim was 'to immobilise Catholics'. The bill was read a second time on 28 February and committed. A new, much longer, bill was drafted.⁴⁷ It was then sent down to the Lower House on 9 March.⁴⁸ In the original bill, although the preamble referred only to Catholic

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 166–8 (emphasis added).

⁴⁴ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, III: 1593–1601, p. 168. As to the clause imposing a fine of £10 on husbands 'for their wyves' recusancy', the anonymous member recorded that 'many there were who had speciall eye to both the statutes of recusants, that no such thinge might be inserted which might wynde them within such a penance' (*Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, III: 1593–1601, p. 168). This report suggests that some members had recusant wives (Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments*, pp. 293–4).

⁴⁵ See *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, III: 1593–1601, p. 169.

⁴⁶ *The Statutes of the Realm*, ed. by A. Luders and others, 11 vols (London: Record Commission, 1810–28), IV.ii, pp. 841–3; Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1601*, p. 293.

⁴⁷ Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments*, p. 295.

⁴⁸ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, III: 1593–1601, pp. 126–7.

recusants, the relevant clauses spoke generally of recusancy.⁴⁹ This new bill, on the other hand, clearly declared that ‘popish recusantes’ alone were its intended offenders. It imposed:

Every popish recusant dully convicted being of sixteene yeares old, out of prison, within the land, and denison [*sic*] shall repayre to the place of his most resi[d]ency, or where he was borne, or where his father or mother dwelleth within 40 dayes after this parliament ended; or if he retorne from beyond the sea or out of prison, then within 20 days after his retorne.

All popish recusants allre[a]dy convicted, or that shall be convicted, having any place of aboad [*sic*] within 40 days after the end of this parliament to repayre to their place of most aboad [*sic*] and not to remove thence above fyve miles, uppon payne of forfe[i]ture of all their goodes and twoe partes of the profites of their landes.⁵⁰

They were to ‘geve upp their names to the minister of that parish where they are, and he shall certify the same to the justices in their sessions’. Anyone suspected to be a Jesuit or seminarist who refused to answer the authorities’ questioning were to be committed to prison and remain imprisoned until he answered. The bill was committed, and this amended bill presumably passed the Commons and was sent back, along with seven other bills, to the Lords on 6 or 7 April.⁵¹

The proceedings of these bills suggest three points about the application of the term ‘recusants’ in the 1590s. Firstly, outside the statutory usage, the term was not used exclusively to identify Catholic recusants but used more generally to signify those who refused to attend church. Secondly, the target of the bills was Catholic recusants. Thirdly (and consequently), the term ‘recusants’ was *statutorily* used to designate Catholic recusants. It is clear that the government was reluctant to use in the statutes the term ‘recusants’ in other than a Catholic context. In the first act, Protestant

⁴⁹ Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1601*, p. 295.

⁵⁰ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, III: 1593–1601, p. 126. ‘twoe partes’: see 35 Eliz. c. 2 in *The Statutes of the Realm*, ed. by A. Luders and others, 11 vols (London: Record Commission, 1810–28), IV.ii, pp. 843–6, especially 843–4. See also Hartley, *Elizabeth’s Parliaments*, p. 100.

⁵¹ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, III: 1593–1601, pp. 126–7 and 164; Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1601*, p. 296. Neale notes that ‘in what appears to have been a preliminary draft that passed through Burghley’s hands, there were two other penal clauses, omitted when the bill was finally framed’ (p. 295).

non-conformists, against whom the act was directed, were called 'seditious sectaries' and 'disloyal persons obstinately refusing to come to church'. The second act clearly identified 'popish recusants' as its intended offenders.⁵²

(2) Anti-Recusant Acts and Penalties

As we have noted in chapter 5, some Shakespeare biographers are not familiar with the details of the penalties imposed on recusants, and the lack of such knowledge has produced inaccurate representation of the Shakespeares' religious view. Let us, therefore, survey the penalties that the government imposed on Catholics, both recusant and non-recusant.⁵³

As we have briefly seen, in 1559 the Act of Supremacy removed England from papal jurisdiction, and thereby the monarch became the 'supreme governor' of the re-established church. The Act of Uniformity had restored the revised edition of the 1552 Edwardian prayer book, and the clergy was ordered to use the said prayer book from the feast of St. John, 24 June (1 Eliz. c. 2 §§ 1–2). From this date, Elizabethans were by this act bound to attend church every Sunday and holy days:

from and after the sayd Feast of the Natyvitee of S^t John Baptist nexte coming, all and every p[er]son and p[er]sons inhabiting within this Realme or any other the Quenes Ma^{ties} Dominions, shall diligentlye and fathefully, having no lawfull or reasonable Excuse to be absent, endeavour themselves to resorte to theyr P[ar]lishe Churche or Chappell accustomed, or upon reasonable let therof to some usuall place wher C^{omon} Prayer and suche Service of God shalbee [*sic*] used in suche tyme of lett, upon every Sundaye and other dayes ordained and used to bee kept Holy days, and then and ther tabyde orderlye and soberly during the tyme of the Comon Prayer Preacheinges or other Service of God ther to be used and ministered. (1 Eliz. c. 2 § 3)

⁵² An explicit reference statutorily made to a broader interpretation occurs in the preamble of the Act of 1604 (1 Jac. 1 c. 4) which deals with 'any manner of recusants'. By contrast, the title 'popish recusants' remained 'the official designation of Catholic offenders' in all later acts relating to church attendance'.⁵² At the same time, the statute differentiated between 'recusants' and 'papists'. 'Papists' now 'narrowly defined' those who 'had either this far complied with the regulations, or had yet to be formally convicted of infringing them' (Alexandra Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England*, Royal Historical Studies in History Series 68 (Woodbridge: Boydell for the Royal Historical Society, 1993) p. 10).

⁵³ For the statutes (acts) I used *The Statutes of the Realm*, ed. by A. Luders and others, 11 vols (London: Record Commission, 1810–28).

The offender was subject to ecclesiastical censure — that is, excommunication — and had to pay the fine of 1s. (12p). The fine was to be collected by the churchwardens of the offender's parish and to be used for the poor of the same parish (1 Eliz. c. 2 § 3).⁵⁴

While the charge of executing this provision was thus laid on the parochial ecclesiastical courts, the act empowered justices of oyer and terminer and justices of assize to 'here and determine al and al man[n]er of Offences' at their sessions (§ 5), and archbishops and bishops in their dioceses were allowed to attend with them 'at [their] lybertie and pleasure' (§ 6).

In the second parliament of the new regime (11 January 1562 – 10 April 1563), the lord keeper, Sir Nicholas Bacon, complained that the act was not in force: 'How commeth it to passe that the common people in the cuntrye universallie come so seldome to common prayer and devine service, and when they doe come be there mane tymes soe vainely occupied or at the least doe not there as they shoulde doe, but for wante of this discipline?'⁵⁵ The notorious act imposing a £20 fine thus passed during the session of 16 January – 18 March 1581. Cecil's report written shortly after the act had passed tells us why the new fine was introduced: 'The cause that moved the renewing of this law, for that it said the peane [*sic*] being no greater than XIIId. no officer did seke to charg[e] any offender ther[e]unto, so that the nombers of evill disposed persons increased ther[e]in to offend by the Imprinte'.⁵⁶

The 1581 act ordered that 'every p[er]son above the Age of xvj yeares', who 'shall not repaire to some Churche Chappell or usuall Place of Common Prayer' as required in the Act of Uniformity, *and* was 'lawfullye convicted', was to 'forfaite to the Queenes Ma^{tie}, for every Moneth after thend [*sic*] of this Session of Parliament

⁵⁴ In their discussion of the recusancy fine, the German critics, H. Mutschmann and K. Wentersdorf, and James P. Conlan entirely neglect the way in which the fine was collected and used. See my discussion in chapter 5.

⁵⁵ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, I: 1558–1581, p. 82.

⁵⁶ Quoted in Walker, p. 13.

whiche he or she shallso [*sic*] forbear, twentie powndes of lawfull Englishe Money' until he or she conformed and attended church (23 Eliz. c. 1 § 4). The civil courts were no longer regarded as merely ancillary to the ecclesiastical in dealing with recusancy. It was to be tried by justices of the peace in their open quarter sessions, or by justices of oyer and terminer or of assize and gaol-delivery on their several circuits, within one year and a day 'after everye suche Offence com[m]itted' (§§ 6–7).

Furthermore, in a case of forbearing of twelve months duration, certified in writing by the bishop of the offender's diocese or a justice of assize into the court of King's Bench, the offender was to be bound with two sureties in a sum of at least £200 'to good Behaviour' and continue so bound until his or her conformity (§ 4). In addition to these penalties, the act expressly stated that the old ecclesiastical censures and penalties were to remain effective (§ 12).

The saying of mass was punished by a fine of 200 marks with imprisonment until the fine was paid, and the hearing of mass was punished by a fine of 100 marks with imprisonment for one year (§ 3). '[A]ny p[er]son or p[er]sons Bodye Pollitike or Corporate who kept schoolmasters unlicensed by the bishop after Whitsunday 1581 was to forfeit £10 'for everye Moneth so ke[e]ping him'. The schoolmasters themselves were to be imprisoned for one year 'without Baile or Mainepriise' (§5). The offenders could escape the penalties if they submitted and conformed before the bishops of their dioceses before they were indicted. After indictment, they could be discharged if they made a 'Recognition of such Submission' in open court at the assizes or sessions of their counties as formulated in the act. The act added the condition 'havige not before made like submission at any his Tryall being indicted for his firste lyke Offence', implying that the offenders, if indicted again, would have no remedy and would have to pay the penalty upon conviction (§§ 6–7).

All forfeitures resulting from this act were to be divided into three equal parts: one third to be allotted to the queen's personal use, one third to be used for relief of the poor in the parishes where the offences were committed, and one third to any person who would 'sue for the same in Any Courte of Recorde by Accõn of Debt Byll Plainte or Informacõn, in whiche Suite no Essoigne Proteccõn or Wager of Lawe shalbe allowed' (§ 8).

'This paene', wrote Cecil shortly after the act was passed, 'is not to be levied, but when the offender [*sic*] is hable to pay it. For other wise [*sic*] the offender being not hable or not willyng to paye it, is only emprisoned'.⁵⁷ 'He envisaged the fine applied only where the wealthy recusant was likely to pay it. The £20 fine in his eyes was not a general penalty for all recusants but a possible penalty to be used when it would produce results'. It is presumed that by the fine Cecil planned to crush wealthy recusant gentry who harboured priests and provided places for Mass for Catholics in their neighbourhood. Without them, Cecil calculated, recusancy would fade away. The 1581 act, therefore, was 'a financial attack on the richer [C]atholics mounted by the civil authorities'.⁵⁸

This act specified nothing more than administrative machinery. It is thus not surprising that there was scarcely a county that did not require the Privy Council's supervision. The Council's letter (dated 28 May 1581) to Chaderton, bishop of Chester, presents the instruction that the Council sent out to the bishops throughout the realm:

Her Majestie [. . .] hath willed us to require your Lordship forthwith, upon the receipt herof, to make or cause to be made diligent search and inquiry (as well accordinge to your former certificate of recusants, as by other the best meanes that yow can) what persons there be within your diocesse which doe, at this

⁵⁷ Quoted in Walker, p. 136. Several Catholic pamphlets commenting on the act were circulated. See Walker, pp. 140–4.

⁵⁸ Walker, pp. 136–7 and 145.

present, refuse to come to the church, and to behave themselves as by the said lawe is required.⁵⁹

The bishops were to take or cause to be taken:

[. . .] witnesses in writinge, both of the warnynge soe geven unto them and there refusall, under the hand of the parson and curates and some other honest persons; which we pray yow, in everie shire within youre diocesse, to preferre unto the Custodes Rotulorum and to the Justices of the Peace at there next Sessions, so as the sayd persons may be indicted and ordered as by the saide lawe is appointed.⁶⁰

The indictment of recusants was collected by the local minister in each parish; it was handed on to the bishop so that he might draw up a list for his diocese; and the list was used at the quarter sessions as the basis of proceedings against those named on it.

Having instructed the bishops, the Council then issued orders to the justices of the peace in all the counties on 20 June 1582. They were to indict all the known recusants in their divisions 'suche as heretofore have not be[e]n indicted and suche as do already stand indicted, to take bondes for their appearance at the next Assises before the Justices of Assise [. . .]'⁶¹

Unlike the Act of Uniformity, the 1581 act did not state how the £20 fine was to be exacted. It relied entirely on imprisonment as a means of enforcement of the act, but the threat of imprisonment was not effective. The special instructions issued in 1582 make clear the Privy Council's demand that the fines incurred under the 1581 act were to be paid into the exchequer. The principal local agents of the exchequer were the county sheriffs, 'in whose hands, chiefly, lay responsibility for gathering of the revenue which was organised throughout on a county basis'.⁶² Francis Xavier Walker's study of exchequer receipt books clearly shows that the vast majority of recusants were incapable of paying the fine. In December 1582 the Privy Council drew up a list of recusants from county returns. From the twenty-two counties for

⁵⁹ Quoted in Walker, p. 152.

⁶⁰ Quoted in Walker, p. 153.

⁶¹ Quoted in Walker, p. 160.

⁶² Bowler, introduction to *Recusant Roll, No. 2 (1593–1594)*, pp. xx and xlix. For more detailed discussion of the structure and function of the exchequer, see Bowler's introduction, pp. xlvi–lxviii.

which returns were made, there was a total of 1,939 recusants known to the local authorities. Between the Michaelmas term of 1582 and the end of the Easter term of 1586 (that is, between 1582 and 1587), however, no more than sixty-nine names appeared on the exchequer receipt books.⁶³

There was no doubt that some alteration of the act was necessary. In 1587, therefore, the act ‘for the more speedie and due executiōn of c[er]teyne Branches of the Statues made in the xxiiijth [sic] yere of the Quenes Majesties Raigne, intituled An Acte to reteyne the Quenes Majesties Subjectes in their due obeydience’ (29 Eliz. c. 6) was passed. Conviction for recusancy was henceforth to take place in the court of King’s Bench or at assizes or general sessions of gaol-delivery (§ 2). One of the main features of the act (explained in §§ 3–4) was to alter the nature of the penalty imposed in the 1581 act. For the past five years (while the 1581 act was effective) recusants were subject to the fines specified in their occasional indictments. The new act imposed a cumulative penalty: a single conviction was sufficient to put recusants in a continuous series of monthly fines of £20 until the recusants conformed regardless of later indictments and convictions. The process of conviction was thus simplified. The assizes were now to handle only a single case against one recusant, whereas in the past every time the £20 fine was imposed, it required an indictment. Moreover, recusants had to prove their conformity before they could escape from the demand from the exchequer for their fines. They continued to be regarded as recusants until they gave definite proof of their conformity. On the other hand, all penalties were to cease immediately after their submission and conformity, or death, ‘and full Satisfaction of

⁶³ Walker, chapter 5 (see the table on pp. 226–7). The act became law in the spring of 1581, but it was not until the Michaelmas term of 1582 that the exchequer receipt books show any entry of recusancy fines. The slackness of local authorities in the execution of the act was another cause for the failure to exact the fines.

all the Arrerages [*sic*] of Twentie Poundes Monthlie', as long as they continued to attend church (§ 6).

Under this act all existing and future convictions were to be estreated into the exchequer. Recusants convicted before 29 October 1586,⁶⁴ if they had not yet conformed, were ordered, 'without any other Indictement or Conviccōn', to pay into the exchequer all arrears of debt 'accordinge to the rate of Twentie pounds for everie Moneth' since their first conviction. The total debt was to be cleared in two payments — one half by the end of Trinity term 1578, and the other half by the end of Hilary term 1588 — unless other times should be fixed 'with good band [*sic*] and suertie taken' by the arrangement with the chief officers of the exchequer by the end of the said Trinity term. The same recusants were henceforth also to pay into the exchequer every Easter and Michaelmas term half-yearly sum of their fines of £20 a month until they submitted and conformed (§ 3). Recusants convicted on or after 29 October 1586 'shall in suche of the Termes of Easter or Micha[elm]as shall be next after such conviction' pay into the exchequer a sum 'comprising not only £20 for every month referred to in the indictment upon which he was convicted but also £20 for every month intervening between the date of [his] conviction and the said next term of Easter (or Michaelmas)'. They were also obliged to continue to pay into the exchequer 'without any other Indictement or Conviccōn' the half-yearly sum of their fines 'after the rate of Twentie poundes for everie month'. It was enacted that 'yf Defaulte shalbe made in anye parte of anye payment aforesaide', the queen 'shall & maye, by P[ro]cesse oute of the said Exchequer, take seize and enjoy all the Goodes, and two partes aswell of all the [recusants'] Landes Ten[emen]tes and Hereditaments Leases

⁶⁴ Before 1793 acts, unless stated otherwise, came into force as from the first day of the parliamentary session in which they were passed. 29 Eliz. c. 6 thus became effective not on 23 March 1587 (when the act received the royal assent) but on 29 October 1586 (the opening day of the present session of parliament). See Bowler, *Recusant Roll, No. 2 (1593–1594)*, p. xxiv, n. 73.

and Fermes [*sic*]', leaving the third part 'to and for the Maynten^ance and Relief' of the recusants' wives and children (§ 4).

The new act also prevented recusants from making conveyance of any estates, a device whereby they could appear to have no estates to be confiscated. All such legal devices were declared void, and the lands were to be confiscated for the queen's use (§ 8).

The aim of the 1587 act was to achieve smooth and quick operation of fining recusants. Walker's study of the exchequer receipt books between 1587 and 1593 shows 'immediate proof of the effectiveness' of the act.⁶⁵ More recusants were brought within the scope of the new act. Yet the total number of recusants who paid the fines for the period remained less than 200 — it was still a small figure. One achievement of the act, however, was the income through the confiscation of the recusants' goods and two thirds of their lands in case of any default in paying the fines. These lands were leased out to farmers who were then responsible for the payment of a sum agreed on. The exchequer receipts show its overall effect. In 1587–93 'when the yearly receipts were rising, as was the yearly number of recusants on the exchequer books, there was also a rise' in the payments from the rent of lands confiscated from recusants.⁶⁶

The 1587 act, however, was by no means perfect. In 1592 the exchequer initiated the separate 'recusant roll'. Previously, recusancy fines were accounted for along with other sorts of state revenue. The recusant roll was the 'annual Exchequer statements of the revenue due from the forfeitures of recusants, recording the audit of the sheriff's accounts connected therewith'.⁶⁷ As compared with the exchequer receipt

⁶⁵ Chapter 6, especially pp. 247–74 (p. 249).

⁶⁶ Walker, pp. 256–67 (p. 267).

⁶⁷ Dom Hugh Bowler, 'Some Notes on the Recusant Rolls of the Exchequer', *Recusant History* 4 (1957–8), pp. 182–98 (p. 184).

books that recorded what was paid in, the recusant roll was ‘an account of the dues to the Crown for recusancy put in charge to the Sheriff, the official whose duty it was to account at the Exchequer for that part of the royal revenue which constituted the quota of his bailiwick, the county’.⁶⁸ Shortly after the 1581 act was passed, Cecil distinguished three groups of recusants: those able to pay the whole fines; those able to pay part; and those unable to pay. The recusant roll of 1592 discloses that the largest portion of the recusants belonged to Cecil’s third category. The 1587 act succeeded in increasing the amount of fines levied from a small group of wealthy recusants,⁶⁹ but it failed, as did the 1581 act, to effect a change in the larger part of the recusant body — recusants of the middling sort.⁷⁰

‘Despite the increased exchequer efficiency there was no sign that a large section of recusants had been induced to change their convictions from fear of financial loss’.⁷¹ It does not mean, however, recusants of the middling sort escaped from the penalties imposed by these acts. As we have already seen, a special act was passed in 1593 against ‘Popishe Recusants’ (25 Eliz. c. 2). Convicted Catholic recusants above the age of sixteen were to repair to their places of abode or birth and not to go five miles from thence, upon pain of forfeiture of their goods and profits of their lands to the queen (§§ 1–2). They were to ‘notyfie their comynge thither, and p[re]sent themselves and deliver their true Names in Writinge to the Minister or Curate of the same Parishe, and to the Constable Headboroughe or Tythingman of the Towne’, who were instructed to present the records of the recusants to justices of the peace of the county at the next general or quarter sessions (§ 4). Both offenders and recusants who did not have lands or goods of the yearly value of 20 marks were to

⁶⁸ M. M. C. Calthrop, introduction to *Recusant Roll, No. 1 (1592–3)*, Catholic Record Society Publications 18 (London: Strowger & Son for the Catholic Record Society, 1916), pp. xi–xii.

⁶⁹ See Walker, pp. 267–90.

⁷⁰ See *Recusant Roll, No. 1 (1592–3)*.

⁷¹ Walker, p. 295.

abjure the realm forever. If they refused to leave the realm or returned to the realm after their abjuration without the queen's special licence, they were judged felons and were to 'suffer and lose as in case of Felonye without Benefytt of Clergie' (§ 5). To travel above five miles from their usual abode on business, recusants had to obtain a licence (§ 7). All penalties were discharged once they made 'publike and open Submission and Declaracōn of [. . .] their Conformitie to her Majesties Lawes & Statute' in the formula specified in the act (§ 10).

These acts were by no means perfect, and many recusants escaped from the penalties the government imposed on them. However, in addition to these penalties, recusants were subject to old ecclesiastical censures including excommunication. The penalty of excommunication was heavy. No excommunicate person could be married or stand as godparent. The only way to have the penalty lifted was to obey the order of the court and attend church. If recusants refused and persisted in remaining excommunicates, the penalty of greater excommunication was imposed. With the denunciation as a recusant under the greater ban, the offender became 'a social outcast':⁷²

Contact with him [or her], socially or otherwise, brought an automatic sentence of excommunication on those who did so. The defendant in an action with such an excommunicate could plead his [or her] condition as a bar to further action. Nor was his [or her] evidence court worthy. He [or she] was an outcast in life, and in death could not lie in his parish church or expect [C]hristian burial.⁷³

To have this greater penalty removed, the excommunicates had to pay the requisite fee. Excommunication meant 'social, legal and religious disabilities':

The recusant[s] had not only to decide to be absent from church on Sunday; but in that decision, [they] had to run the risk of cutting [themselves] off from the life of [their own] parish[es], from the marriages of friends, the baptisms of relations, perhaps even [their] own children, and the burial of neighbours. To decide to obey this law was to risk cutting the innumerable ties that bound [them] to the only social world [they] knew.⁷⁴

⁷² Walker, p. 10.

⁷³ Quoted in Walker, p. 10.

⁷⁴ Walker, p. 12.

Walker asserts that 'the ramifications of the ban of excommunication' was the real force of the law against recusants. Elizabethan England was a 'country of small closely knit communities'.⁷⁵ Neither Stratford nor London was an exception. Shakespeare biographers must keep in mind this social background when they examine the Shakespeares' religion.

**B. Extracts from Alexander Hoghton's Will and Testament
(3 August 1581; proved on 12 September 1581)⁷⁶**

(1) Period of Annuities to be Paid

[. . .] The w[hi]ch my intenc[i]on & meanyng, I truste that whosoeu[er] shall fortune to be the Iudge for matter[es] in the Chancerye ffrom tyme to tyme wyll see dulye executed accordinge to Equitye & good Consyence[.] Therefore for the playne declarac[i]on howe & in what sorte the said rente shalbe dysposede & howe longe the same shall contynewe It ys my wyll ffyrste that the said Rente shall haue Contynewance vnto the said Thomas & Rob[e]rt & their heires for & duringe the naturall lyve & lyves & of the longest lyver of these my servant[es] that ys to weete [then follow the names of thirty guarantors]

(2) Annuitants and their Annuities

And yt ys my wyll that the said rente shalbe devydette amongeste my said servant[es] in man[ner] & forme fol[l]owyng, soe that there shalbe ye[a]rely due & payeable, vnto the said Thomas sharpe the some <of> three pound[es] syxe shilling[es] eighte pence, vnto the said Thomas Coston Twenty shylling[es], vnto the said Thomas barker Twenty shylling[es], vnto the said Roger dyconson Thryttyne shillinge[s]

⁷⁵ Walker, p. 12.

⁷⁶ Transcribed in David George, ed., *Lancashire*, Records of Early English Drama Series (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 156–8.

foure pence, vnto the said will[i]am ormesheye al[ia]s Ascrofte Thryttyne shylling[es]
 foure pence, vnto the said Rob[e]rt Boulton Twentye shylling[es], vnto the said
 Thomas warde Twentye shylling[es], vnto the said ffowke Gyllom ffortye shilling[es],
 vnto the said will[ia]m shakeshafte ffortye shylling[es], vnto the said Thomas
 Gyllome fortye shylling[es] & vnto the said Roger dugdayle fforty shylling[es]. To
 eu[er]y of theym accordinge to seu[er]all porc[i]ons, To haue & p[er]ceyve vnto
 everye one of theym the said seu[er]all somes for & duringe theyre naturall lyves. And
 yf yt fortune anye of theym to dye Lyvyng the Reste[,] Then yt ys my wyll that the
 porc[i]on of that partye that shall soe dye shalbe equallye devyded amongeste theym
 that shall survyve & soe frome one to one as longe as anye of theym shalbe
 lyvin<ge>, soe that the survyvor of theym all shall haue for & duringe his naturall
 lyffe, the said whole & entyre Rente of Syxtyne pound[es] thryttyne shillyng[es] foure
 pence.

**C. The Epitaph Carved on the Tomb of the Stanley Family
 in the Collegiate Church of St. Bartholomew (Tong, Shropshire)⁷⁷**

**(1) The Portland manuscripts at Nottingham University Library (MS Pw. V.37,
 p. 12)**

An Epitaph on Sir Edward Standly [*sic*]

Shakespeare Engraven on his Tomb

in Tong Church

Not monumental stone preserves our fame

Nor sky-aspiring pyramids our name;

The memory of him for whom this stands,

Shall outlive marble, and defacers hands:

⁷⁷ Gordon Campbell, 'Shakespeare and the Youth of Milton', *Milton Quarterly* 33 (1999), 95–105.

When all to times consumption shall be given
 Standley [*sic*] for whom this stands shall stand in heaven.

Idem, ibidem On Sir Thomas Standley [*sic*]

Ask who lies here, but do not weep
 He is not dead, he doth but sleep;
 This stony register is for his bones
 His fame is more perpetual than these stones:
 And his own goodnes[s] with himself being gone
 Shall live, when earthly monument is none.

(2) The Folger Shakespeare Library (MS V.a.103, Pt. 1, fol. 8)

An Epitaph on Sir Edward Standly [*sic*]
Shakespeare Engraven on his Tomb in
 Tong Church

Not monumental stone preserves our fame,
 Nor sky-aspiring pyramids our name;
 The memory of him for whom this stands
 Shall out live marble and defacers hands
 When all to times consumption shall be given,
 Standly [*sic*] for whom this stands shall stand in heaven.

Idem, ibidem On Sir Thomas Standley [*sic*]

Ask who lies here but do not weep,
 He is not dead he doth but sleep;
 This stony register is for his bones,

His fame is more perpetual, than these stones:
 And his own goodness with himself being gone,
 Shall live when earthly monument is none.

(3) The Rawlinson manuscripts, Bodleian Library (MS Rawlinson Poetical 117, fol. 269v)

An Epitaph

Not monumental stone preserves thy fame
 Nor sky aspiring pyramids thy name
 The monument of him for whom this stands
 Shall outlive marble or defacers hands
 Ask who lies here but do not weep
 He is not dead he doth but sleep
 This earthly register his [*sic*] for his bones
 His fame is more perpetual than these stones
 And when to time consumption shall be given
 Stanlye for whom this stands shall stand in heaven

(4) William Dugdale's 'Visitation of Shropshire, 1663–1644', College of Arms (MS c.35, p. 20)

These following verses were made by William Shakespeare

the late famous tragedian

Written upon the east end

of this tomb

Ask who lies here, but do not weep

He is not dead he doth but sleep

This stony register is for his bones

His fame is more perpetual than these stones.

And his own goodness with himself being gone

Shall live when earthly monument is none.

Written upon the west end

Thereof

Not monumental stone preserves our fame,

Nor sky aspiring pyramids out name

The memory of him for whom this stands

Shall out-live marble and defacers hands.

When all to times consumption shall be given

Stanley, for whom this stands, shall stand in heaven.

**(5) Dugdale's 'Visitation of Shropshire, 1663–1644', written in a different hand
(MS c.35, p. 41)**

At the head of the tomb are these verses

Not monumental stone preserves our fame

Nor sky aspiring pyramids our name

The memory of him for whom this stands

Shall out-live marble and defacers hands.

When all to times consumption shall be given

Standley [*sic*] for whom this stands shall stand in heaven

a little lower on the verge

Beati mortui qui in Domino moriantur

[drawing of the Stanley monument (illus. 6)]

At the foot of the monument

Ask who lies here, but do not weep,

He is not dead, he doth but sleep.

This stony register is for his bones

His fame is more perpetual than these stones

And his own goodness with himself being gone

Shall live when earthly monument is none.

D. Extract from the Inventory of Robert Hesketh (16 November 1620)⁷⁸

Instrum[en]t[es] of Musicque praised		
Imprimis Vyolls & vyol< . . >t[es] w[i]th Chist for them		vij li.
< . . > paire of Virginalls		1 s.
< . . > Chist of Wynd Instrument[es] Sagbutts, Howboies & Cornetts		ij li.
It[em] more Vyols violen, Cithron flute in veluent Case, taber pypes		iiij li.
It[em] a Chist wth Musicque bookes in		vj s. viij d.
It[em] one Coach & all ffurniture thereto belonginge ⁷⁹		vj li. i3 s. 8 d.

⁷⁸ *Lancashire*, ed. by David George, p. 153.
⁷⁹ I am not sure why George included this entry, but I assume that the coach was used for the players' transportation and chairs or benches to furnish the stage.

E. Edmond Malone's Communications with James Davenport and John Jordan

(1) Malone's letter to Davenport (21 October 1789)⁸⁰

London, October 21, 1789

Dear Sir,

I have some doubts concerning the very curious paper you were so good as to transmit to me, which you may, perhaps, be able to dispel.

It appears to me that the handwriting is at least thirty years more modern than the year 1601, when John Shakspeare, the father of our poet, died; and the spelling is in many places not sufficiently ancient: thus we frequently find the words mercy, majesty, etc. The name Shakspeare is written throughout with a final e, a practice which began to prevail in the middle of the last century;⁸¹ but of which I have not found a single instance before in any instrument whatsoever.

The pointing throughout is remarkably correct, but perhaps this may have been done by Mr. Payton or by you. It is very unlucky that the first leaf is lost, as in the first article we probably should have found a description of the occupation of the writer, and the time when it was drawn up. Is there the most remote chance of finding it now? Is Mosely the bricklayer yet living? How long had he this little relique in his possession before he gave it to Mr. Payton, and did he ask any price for it? Did Mr. Thos. Hart ever hear of it?

It is very remarkable that among the children of old John Shakspeare recorded in your register, there is not one of the name of John. I have sometimes [been] inclined to think that there was an elder son of that name, born before the commencement of

⁸⁰ Edmond Malone, *The Correspondence of Edmond Malone, the Editor of Shakespeare, with the Rev. James Davenport, D.D., Vicar of Stratford-on-Avon*, ed. by J. O. Halliwell, (London: Thomas Richards, 1864), pp. 44–7.

⁸¹ In Malone's 'An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the English Stage' (1790), the testator's name is spelt *without* a final 'e' (see *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare*, ed. by Edmond Malone, 10 vols (London: H. Baldwin for J. Rivington and Sons, 1790), I.ii, pp. 162–6).

the register; and if such a one there was, and he lived to the year 1630, or thereabouts, this paper might have been written by him and this would solve some of the difficulties which I have stated: yet to find a person so deeply tinged with popery at that late period, appointing the blessed Virgin his executress, appears strange also. If there even was a younger John, he must have died, I think, before 1608.

I beg to know whether there is any tombstone within or without your church, that marks the place where John Shakspeare was buried. I have been able to make out the whole of the last leaf of this curious paper, in which the ink is very faint, and some of the words almost obliterated, except one line, concerning which I have some doubts. The passage is in the 13th article and runs thus: — ‘There to blesse for ever and ever the direful iron of the launce, which like a charge in a censore, formes so sweet and pleasant a monument within the scared breast of my lord and Saviour’.

The words underscored are those I doubt about — are the contents of a censor called anywhere in the sacred writings its charge?

In the last article the writer desires that his will, as he calls it, may be buried with him; perhaps that request may have been complied with, and this may have been a copy made previous to his interment. To investigate this would be curious.

I beg to know whether the numerals III, V, etc., prefixed to the articles, were originally prefixed, or were added since?

Excuse all this trouble, and believe me, dear sir,

Your very faithful and obedient servant,

Edmond Malone

[P.S.] Among the present aldermen of Stratford, is there any one that is a shop-keeper, or any of higher an occupation than that of a butcher? You know my object in this enquiry.

I have this moment observed that in the 12th article he exhorts his parents to pray for him: another circumstance which leads us to a younger John.

Would it not be possible to ascertain by means of Mr. Hamond Lucy the age of Sir Thomas Lucy at his death? Pray be so good as to return my thanks to Mr. Payton.

[Franked by J. Courtenay]

(2) Extract from Malone's Letter to Jordan (10 March 1790)⁸²

[. . .] You have inserted a copy of the religious testament of John Shakspeare, whom I believe to have been the poet's eldest brother. The original of this was, some time ago, transmitted to me by Mr. Davenport, but the first leaf was wanting, containing the first two articles and part of the third, in consequence of which I have been obliged to print it imperfect. On my writing to Stratford, on this subject, I understood that Mr. Hart said it wanted the first leaf, when originally found; and Mr. Payton, I think, concurred in the same account. How, then, have you made a copy of the first two articles and part of the third? When was your copy made, and from whom did you obtain the original? And did you, some years ago, send a copy of this paper to the printer of the Gentleman's Magazine?

(3) Jordan's Reply to Malone (19 March 1790)⁸³

I think myself much honoured by your agreeable letter, and am pleased with the queries you have proposed therein, and I shall therefore answer them as well as my poor abilities will enable me to do; querie first, — The religious will of John Shakspeare, whom I believe to have been the poet's father, and not his elder brother, as you seem to have suggested by an interpolation, was given to me in June, 1785, by

⁸² *Original Letters from Edmond Malone, the Editor of Shakespeare, to John Jordan, the Poet*, ed. by J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, (London: Thomas Richards, 1864), pp. 7–8.

⁸³ Transcribed in *Outlines*, II, pp. 401–2. I doubt that the original punctuation and divisions of paragraphs in Jordan's letter are preserved in Halliwell-Phillipps's transcript. Here I cite the letter as printed in *Outlines*.

Joseph Mosely, a bricklayer of Stratford, who said he found it in 1757; — I observed to him that the beginning was wanting; he answered it was, but it was perfect when he found it; he said that soon after he discovered it, he shewed it to old Mr. Payton, who read it over, and returned it to him, saying he wished the name had been William instead of John; and that there was no father notice taken of it, but it had been thrown about the house in a careless manner till he had mentioned it to me; — I asked him if he had ever shewed it to Thomas Hart; he said he had not; — Thomas Hart never knew of this till I told him of it, which was thirty years after it was found. — I told him I should be glad to have had it perfect; he answered he would endeavour to find what was wanting and would help me to it; — after this I saw no more of him for a long time, during the interval of which I shewed it to Mr. Keating, the bookseller, who desired a copy, which I gave him, who shewed it to several gentlemen for their opinion, some whereof looked upon it as authentick while others thought it a fiction; among the latter was the Rev. Jos. Greene, A.M., rector of Welford, near Stratford, who is a gentleman possessed with good deal of conversation upon the matter; — I told him I should like to have the opinion of the publick; he advised me so to do; accordingly I sent it in the state it then was to the printer of the Gentleman's Magazine for that purpose, who rejected it as spurious; therefore my wishes and curiosity remained unsatisfied; after this I applied to Mosely for what was wanting, who put me off from time to time till the autumn in 1786, when he came to me, and asked me to lend it [to] him to shew to Mr. Tomkins, the mercer, and said he would seek for what was wanting and return it to me again in a few days; but not performing his promise, some time after I asked him for it, and he said he had given it to Mr. Payton of Shuttery, from whom I knew it was irrecoverable; — I then desired to know whether he had found the rest part of it, and he answered in the negative, and promised that, as soon as he did find it, I should have the first sight of it; this past on without any

occurrence till after Michaelmass in 1788, when he was taken ill in a decline, and, as I was going by his door he called me in and said he had found what was wanting of the writing, and I might copy it if I pleased, which I accordingly did, and was desirous of keeping the original, which was very much worn and torn, but he was very unwilling, and said he would give it to Mr. Payton, who had the rest part of it, but whether he ever did or not, I cannot say, for he died about Christmass following, so that if he never gave it to Mr. Payton it is intirely lost; — on the top of the outside leaf was the following memorandum, — ‘found the 29 of April, 1757’; — this is all the information I am able to give of this matter, so beg leave to submit it to your superior judgment to make of it what use you please.

(4) Extract from Malone’s Letter to Jordan (25 March 1790)⁸⁴

Sir, — I received your packet safe by the coach, and request to know whether the first copy which you made of John Shakspeare’s Will, and which you have inserted in your small quarto book, was taken from the original found by Joseph Mosely, or from a copy made by him or any other person; and whether the leaf which Mosely gave you shortly before his death containing the first and second articles, was of the same size and written in the same manner with the rest. The five leaves which were sent to me were very small, tacked together by a thread: the size the eighth part of a sheet, and the upper part of the last page but one, almost illegible.

When did Mosely first mention his having found this paper (I mean the Will) to any one?

Why should he ask you to lend him your copy to shew Mr. Tomkins when he had himself the original?

⁸⁴ *Original Letters from Edmond Malone*, pp. 11–2.

Was the copy in your book made from that you gave Mr. Keating, or from the original papers?

Did you make any memorandum of the year in which John Shakespeare was admitted to his freedom of the corporation of Shoemakers[?]

I am strongly inclined to think that this John was the poet's eldest brother, born before the commencement of the Register; because it is extremely improbable that among so many sons not one should have been called after the father. The houses in Henley Street devolving to Wm. Shakspeare is no objection, because John might have died without issue, before his brother William.

[. . .]

**F. Marriage Bond Given by Sureties of Shakespeare
on the Issue of a Marriage Licence to him⁸⁵**

Noverint universi per presentes nos ffulconem Sandells de Stratford in Comitatu Warwicensi agricolam et Johannem Rychardson ibidem agricolam teneri et firmiter obligari Ricardo Cosin generoso et Roberto Warmstry notario publico in quadraginta libris bone et legalis monete Anglie solvendis eisdem Ricardo et Roberto heredibus executoribus vel assignatis suis ad quam quidem solucionem bene et fideliter faciendam obligamus nos et utrumque nostrum per se pro toto et in solidum heredes executores et administratores nostros firmiter per presentes sigillis nostris sigillatas datas 28 die novembris Anno Regni domine nostre Elizabethe Dei gratia Anglie ffrancie et Hibernie Regine fidei defensoris &c. 25^o.

[Let all men know by these presents that we Fulke Sandells of Stratford in the County of Warwick, husbandman, and John Rychardson there husbandman, are held and firmly bound by Richard Cosin gentleman and Robert Warmstry public notary to pay

⁸⁵ *Minutes and Accounts*, III: 1577–1586, pp. 112–3 (English translation by Richard Savage).

forty pounds of good and lawful money of England to the same Richard and Robert, their heirs executors or assigns: to make which payment well and faithfully we bind ourselves and each of us severally for the whole and total amount, our heirs executors and administrators firmly by these presents sealed with our seals. Given on the 28th day of November in the 25th year of the reign of our Lady Elizabeth, by the grace of God Queen of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith &c.]

The condicion of this obligacion ys suche that if her[e]after there shall not appe[a]re any lawfull lett or impediment by reason of any precontract consaguinitie affinitie or by any other lawfull meanes whatsoever but that William Shagspere [*sic*] one thone partie, and Anne Hathwey of Stratford in the Dioces[e] of worcester maiden may lawfully solennize [*sic*] matrimony together and in the same afterwards remaine and continew like man and wiffe according vnto the lawes in that behalf provided and moreover if there be not at this present time any action sute quarrell demaund moved or depending before any iudge ecclesiasticall or temporall for and concerning any suche lawfull lett or impediment. And moreover if the said William Shagspere do not proceed to solennizacion of mar[r]iadg[e] with the said Anne Hathwey without the consent of hir fri[e]ndes. And also if the said William do vpon his owne proper costes and expenses defend & save harmles the right Reverend father in god lord John bushop of worcester and his offycers for licencing them the said William and Anne to be mar[r]ied together with once asking of the bannes of matrimony betwe[e]ne them and for all other cavses w^{ch} may ensve by reason or occasion ther[e]of that then the said obligacion to be voyd and of none effect or els to stand & abide in full force and vertue.

G. Honigmann's Chronology of Shakespeare's Early Plays

E. A. J. Honigmann laboured to demonstrate that Shakespeare might have enjoyed a career as a playwright for Lord Strange's company in the 1580s and the early 1590s by proposing early dates for *Titus Andronicus* and *Richard III*.⁸⁶ However, like many other Lancastrians and Catholicising biographers, Honigmann hid from us negative evidence and counter-arguments, particularly the ongoing debates on the dates for these works. A close study of these debates can disclose weaknesses in Honigmann's theory. Let us pause to survey them one by one.

Titus Andronicus

The first quarto of *Titus Andronicus* was published in 1594. Its title-page states that the tragedy was 'plaide by the Right Honourable the Earle of Darbie, Earle of Pembroke, and Earle of Sussex their Seruants'.⁸⁷ E. K. Chambers had conjectured that Strange's men 'may have handed over' *Titus* in its earlier form of *Titus and Vespasian* to Pembroke's men, and Honigmann followed this hypothesis.⁸⁸ Henslowe recorded that Sussex's men performed *Titus Andronicus* in January and February 1594, and the play was entered in the Stationers' Register on 6 February 1594; therefore, argued Honigmann, Sussex's men is 'likely to have been the last company' that performed it before the publication of the quarto. In his letter dated 28 September 1593 Henslowe wrote to Edward Alleyn that Pembroke's men 'are all at home and hauffe ben t[his] v or sixe weackes for they cane not saue ther carges <w>th trauell as I heare & weare fayne to pa[w]ne the<r> parell for ther carge [. . .]'.⁸⁹ Around this time three of Pembroke's men's plays came into the booksellers' hands (*Edward II*, *The*

⁸⁶ See chapter 4 for my examination of Honigmann's dating of 'Let the bird of loudest lay'.

⁸⁷ STC 22328.

⁸⁸ Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923; with correction, 1951; repr. 1961), II, p. 129 (emphasis added).

⁸⁹ Transcribed in *Henslowe's Diary*, ed. by R. A. Foakes and R. T. Rickert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961; 2nd edn, 2002), p. 280. See also Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, II, p. 128.

Taming of A Shrew and *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*).⁹⁰ Honigmann suggested that Pembroke's men had sold *Titus Andronicus* to Sussex's men. He was 'driven to conclude' that the Q1 title-page of the play 'names the companies that acted the play in the correct order'.⁹¹ Presumably, this means that Shakespeare wrote the play for Derby's men before September 1593. Derby's men disappear from the records after December 1582/3 whereas Lord Strange's men were active throughout the 1580s.⁹² Ferdinando, Lord Strange, became fifth earl of Derby on 25 September 1593. Therefore, the Q1 title-page of *Titus Andronicus* refers to the *former* Lord Strange's men, now Derby's men.

Honigmann deduced the date for *Titus Andronicus* from Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), which begins with an introduction in which a Scrivener reads out the Articles of Agreement between the author and the audience. The Articles of Agreement insist that every spectator should 'exercise his own judgment, and not censure by contagion, or upon trust, from another's voice' and that 'he be fixed and settled in his censure [. . .] He that will swear, *Jeronimo* [*The Spanish Tragedy*], or *Andronicus* are the best plays, yet shall pass unexcepted at, here, as a man whose judgment shows it is constant, and hath stood still, these five and twenty, or thirty years'.⁹³ Honigmann took 'five and twenty' and 'thirty' literally and dated *The Spanish Tragedy* to 1589 and *Titus Andronicus* to 1584.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, II, p. 128. *Edward II* was entered in the Stationers' Register on 6 July 1593, and *The Taming of A Shrew* on 1594. *Richard Duke of York* was published in 1595, but has no Stationers' Register entry. See W. W. Greg, *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration*, 4 vols (London: Bibliographical Society, 1970).

⁹¹ Honigmann, p. 60.

⁹² Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, II, pp. 118–24.

⁹³ *Shakespeare: The 'Lost Years'*, pp. 61–2. Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew Fair*, in *The Alchemist and Other Plays*, ed. by Gordon Campbell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), Introduction, lines 87–8 and 90–7.

⁹⁴ For discussion on the date of *The Spanish Tragedy*, see J. R. Mulryne, introduction to *The Spanish Tragedy*, (London: Ernest Benn; New York: W. W. Norton, 1970; 2nd edn, London: A & C Black; New York: W. W. Norton, 1989), pp. xv–xvii (2nd edn, pp. xiii–xiv), and Philip Edwards, introduction to *The Spanish Tragedy*, Revels Plays Series (London: Methuen, 1959), pp. xxi–xxvii.

The dating of *Titus Andronicus* is more complicated than Honigmann suggested. The history of ownership of the play has been debated among modern editors.⁹⁵ The Q1 title-page is the only record of Strange’s men as the owner of a play called *Titus Andronicus*. According to Henslowe they did act a play called *Titus and Vespasian* as ‘ne’ on 11 April 1592, and continued to act it until 25 January 1593. Henslowe sometimes called this play simply *Titus*.⁹⁶ Pembroke’s men are not recorded other than on the Q1 title-page as the owners of *Titus Andronicus*, while Sussex’s men are recorded as having acted a play called ‘titus & ondronicus’ (*Titus and Andronicus*) as ‘ne’ on 23 January 1594 and twice more (on 28 January and 6 February).⁹⁷ It has been assumed that Henslowe’s abbreviation ‘ne’ meant ‘new’, newly revised or newly licensed, which would indicate the play’s first performance on the given date.⁹⁸ By June 1594 a play called *Andronicus* was in the hands of the Admiral’s and Chamberlain’s men, who acted jointly.⁹⁹ To summarise Henslowe’s records:

<u>Company and Play</u>	<u>Period of Performance</u>
Strange’s men <i>Titus and Vespasian</i>	11 April 1592 – 25 January 1593
Sussex’s men <i>Titus and Andronicus</i>	23 January – 6 February 1594
Admiral’s and Chamberlain’s men [<i>Titus and</i>] <i>Andronicus</i>	5 and 12 June 1594

⁹⁵ Although I do not discuss the ‘authorship’ of the play in the present chapter, Brian Vickers has convincingly demonstrated George Peele’s co-authorship (I.1, II, 1, II, 2 and IV.1) in his *Shakespeare, Co-Author: A Historical Study of Five Collaborative Plays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁹⁶ *Henslowe’s Diary*, ed. by Foakes and Rickert, pp. 16–20

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 20–1. The date is usually corrected to be the 24th, because ‘it is the fourth performance recorded by Henslowe that week, and plays were not usually performed on Sundays’ (Brian Vickers, *Shakespeare, Co-Author*, p. 148).

⁹⁸ This assumption has been recently challenged by Winifred Frazer (‘Henslowe’s “ne”’, *Notes and Queries* 236 (1991), 34–5). She argues that ‘ne’ must have been an abbreviation for ‘Newington Butts’ in the Surrey village of Newington, about a mile south-west of London Bridge and that the plays marked ‘ne’ were performed at the theatre there. Vickers considers Frazer’s theory ‘convincing’ (*Shakespeare, Co-Author*, p. 149). If the theory is correct, then it ‘remove[s] any ground for concluding that *Titus Andronicus* was indeed a new play in January 1594 and leaves the question of its date wide open’ (Vickers, *Shakespeare, Co-Author*, p. 149).

⁹⁹ *Henslowe’s Diary*, ed. by Foakes and Rickert, p. 21.

In 1598 Francis Meres attributed the play to Shakespeare, and it appeared in the 1623 folio.¹⁰⁰

We have seen how Chambers and Honigmann interpreted the triple ownership of *Titus Andronicus* on the Q1 title-page. John Dover Wilson believes that *Titus Andronicus* was in its original form a fairly short play (running to about 2,000 lines) and written by George Peele in the spring or summer of 1593 specially for a travelling company. Dover Wilson asserts that it is ‘a fair guess’ that both Strange’s and Pembroke’s men owned copies of the play, and that it was one of these copies which came into the hands of Sussex’s men, and was played by them in January 1594 after being revised by Peele himself and Shakespeare, who expanded the play for London production. They revised the play at the end of 1593 for Sussex’s short London season in late December 1593 and January 1594. After Sussex’s men broke up later that year, they gave Shakespeare the promptbook ‘in return for his labour’, and he carried the play over to the Chamberlain’s men in 1594.¹⁰¹

Paul E. Bennett, on the other hand, has presented a radical theory that the three companies were acting the tragedy jointly.¹⁰² In *A Knack to Know a Knave* appears the following passage which alludes to a certain ‘Titus’ play:

My gracious Lord, as welcome shall you be,
To me, my Daughter, and my sonne in Law,
As Titus was vnto the Roman Senators,
When he had made a conquest on the Goths:
That in requital of his seruice done,
Did offer him the imperiall Diademe:
As they in Titus, we in your Grace still fynd,
The Perfect figure of a Princelie mind.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ David George, ‘Shakespeare and Pembroke’s Men’, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 32 (1981), 305–23 (p. 316).

¹⁰¹ Introduction to *Titus Andronicus*, Cambridge Shakespeare Series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), pp. xxxiv–l (pp. xlviii and xlix).

¹⁰² John Jowett attributes the theory to David George (see Jowett, introduction to *King Richard III* by William Shakespeare, Oxford Shakespeare Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 7, n. 1). However, it should be noted that George, as we shall see shortly, re-worked Bennett’s 1955 theory.

¹⁰³ *STC* 15027, F2.

Strange's men acted this comedy as 'ne' at the Rose on 10 June 1592, and it was entered in the Stationers' Register on 7 January 1594.¹⁰⁴ The quarto of the play was published in the same year, and its title-page states that the play was 'Newlie set foorth, as it hath sundrie tymes bene played by ED. ALLEN and his Companie'.¹⁰⁵ If *A Knack* alludes to *Titus Andronicus* as Dover Wilson suggests, then the tragedy was written before June 1592, as Chambers and Honigmann suggested. Bennett believed that it alluded to *Titus and Vespasian*.

Bennett regards the 1594 quarto of *A Knack* as a memorial reconstruction, that is, a bad quarto, a 'garbled, mutilated, corrupt text [. . .] unplayable, incoherent, and downright unintelligible in spots'. He thus suggests that we 'cannot assume that a single word appearing in the 1594 bad quarto [. . .] actually occurred in the original version presented at the Rose in 1592 and six times thereafter'. *A Knack* contained three direct references to the historical Roman emperor Vespasian and one reference to his son, Domitian. Bennett claims that the eight lines cited above — excepting 'Goths', which Bennett suggests were meant to be 'Jews' — fit Vespasian's other son, Titus Vespasianus, Roman emperor A.D. 78–81, better than the fictional Titus Andronicus.¹⁰⁶ As we have seen, *Titus and Vespasian* opened on 11 April 1592 — just two months before *A Knack* — and was repeatedly performed during the summer season, while *Titus Andronicus* opened in 1594. Bennett's argument thus leads on to the conclusion that *A Knack* alludes to *Titus and Vespasian*, not *Titus Andronicus*. Consequently, if *Titus Andronicus* is not a revised version of *Titus and Vespasian*, we cannot deduce the date of *Titus Andronicus* from the allusion in *A Knack*.

Bennett argues that the reason that those of Strange's men who reconstructed *A Knack* may have confused 'Goths' and 'Jews' was that these actors were already

¹⁰⁴ *Henslowe's Diary*, ed. by Foakes and Rickert, p. 19.

¹⁰⁵ *STC* 15027.

¹⁰⁶ 'An Apparent Allusion to *Titus Andronicus*', *Notes and Queries* 200 (1955), 422–4 (pp. 422–3).

acquainted with *Titus Andronicus* before they began their memorial reconstruction. Bennett takes the title-page of *Titus Andronicus* to mean that the play was first performed by ‘a mixed company of actors, mostly Sussex’s, as Henslowe notes, but also with a few of Derby’s and Pembroke’s’ on 24 January 1594. Bennett suggests further that if Derby’s men acted with Sussex’s and Pembroke’s in *Titus Andronicus*, ‘there is no reason to believe that they did not also participate in the other twenty-nine performances Henslowe listed [. . .] between 27 December 1593 and 6 February 1594’. These twenty-nine performances were of twelve old plays; only *Titus Andronicus* is marked with ‘ne’. Bennett thus suspects that the mixed company, which was planning a season at the Rose for the winter of 1593–4, was ‘short of plays with good box-office appeal’. Bennett thus suggests that Strange’s men, who had enjoyed success with *A Knack* seven times in 1592 and 1593, started to reconstruct the comedy for Sussex’s men. Bennett conjectures that ‘Goths’ replaced ‘Jews’ in the quarto of *A Knack* because by the time it was reconstructed from memory, *Titus Andronicus* had just been written; if, argues Bennett, some of Strange’s men who were rehearsing the newly written tragedy by December 1593 attempted to reconstruct *A Knack* at the same time, they would recall Titus conquering Goths, not Jews. But these men were only a few of the original performers, so their reconstruction — the quarto — was a poor result. If *Titus Andronicus* was written at the end of 1583 and performed for the first time in January 1584, as suggested by Henslowe’s ‘ne’, then the three companies on the Q1 title-page ‘barely had time to do anything but play it jointly’.¹⁰⁷

David George, on the other hand, suggests that it was Pembroke’s men who reconstructed the comedy:

It is doubtful [. . .] that those Strange’s men who seem to have been involved in *Titus Andronicus* in January and February 1594 would have risked patching together *A Knack*; someone else, who had no doubt been in Strange’s at one time,

¹⁰⁷ ‘Shakespeare and Pembroke’s Men’, 316.

reconstructed the play and the passage that fatally confuses Titus Vespasianus, victor over the Jews, and Titus Andronicus, victor over the Goths. Pembroke's carried enough ex-Strange's men in its ranks to have been the party responsible.¹⁰⁸

In fact:

G. R. Proudfoot has noted that *A Knack* contains imitations and echoes from at least half a dozen plays, which belonged variously to the Queen's, Pembroke's, and Strange's. Pembroke alone had been involved in these three repertories. And then, when Pembroke's Men were reconstructing *The Contention* later that spring of 1594, they similarly got *Titus Andronicus* muddled into *The Contention*. Here they are trying to remember 2 *Henry VI*, III.i.152, which runs 'that yet suspect no peril': 'That dreads not yet their lives destruction' (*Contention*, 537), which is none other than *Titus Andronicus*, II.iii.50, 'Which dreads not yet their lives' destruction'.¹⁰⁹

Although George's theory regarding the origin of the reconstruction differs from Bennet, George agrees with Bennett that the three companies on the Q1 title of *Titus Andronicus* jointly acted the play.

George has rejected Chambers's 'revision' theory of the play because 'the stories of *Titus Vespasianus* and *Titus Andronicus* are so radically different' that 'no amount of revision could have changed one plot into the other'.¹¹⁰ It has been generally assumed that 'Pembroke's men was an offshoot company formed to syphon off some of the large number — between 22 and 29 men and boys — who made up the London Strange's company'. According to George, Pembroke's company was 'almost certainly [. . .] a Strange's protégé', for 'no new companies appeared of their own accord in the straitened early 1590s'. From December 1593 to February 1594 plague restrictions were not in force. Pembroke's men, after their bankruptcy in the summer of 1593, had to rely on other companies. George suggests that some of them returned to Derby's men (formerly Strange's men), while others joined Sussex's men in early 1584. He points out 'two reasons why Pembroke's men would have found it attractive to join forces with Sussex's men': they were 'old acquaintances from joint

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 321.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 318.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 317.

playing in 1590–91’, and Sussex’s men ‘bade fair to be the first company back in London as the plague subsided’.¹¹¹ George thus suspects that when ‘this ailing company’ decided to join Sussex’s men for their winter season in 1593, Strange’s men may have asked Shakespeare, ‘their new supplier of successful plays’, to help the two companies ‘with suitable material for a London performance’. Shakespeare may have given the new tragedy entitled *Titus Andronicus* to the joint Pembroke’s and Sussex’s men, and ‘[a] few of Strange’s Men may have joined the enterprise’ with or without the acquiescence of their fellow players.¹¹²

Modern editors’ opinions are divided. The Oxford (one-volume) editors Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor are not persuaded by the ‘joint performance’ theory and date the play to 1592.¹¹³ The Oxford (single-play) editor, Eugene M. Waith, doubts that the Goths in *A Knack* were meant to be Jews and that Titus was the Roman emperor. He argues that Henslowe would not have referred to the company performing *Titus Andronicus* as ‘the earle of susex his men’ if it was a combination of three companies. He thus concludes that the sequential-performance theory is more convincing than the joint-performance theory.¹¹⁴ As to Henslowe’s notation ‘ne’, Waith explains that Henslowe did not use it in the usual sense of ‘new’; he follows Foakes and Rickert’s suggestion that ‘ne’ refers to the securing of a licence, which would be required both for new plays and for those substantially revised.¹¹⁵ On this assumption, Waith prefers to date the original composition of the tragedy to 1592 and the revision to late 1593.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 318

¹¹² Ibid., 306 and 319–20.

¹¹³ *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion*, with John Jowett and William Montgomery (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 113.

¹¹⁴ Introduction to *Titus Andronicus* by William Shakespeare, Oxford Shakespeare Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 9.

¹¹⁵ Waith, pp. 9–10; Foakes and Rickert, introduction to *Henslowe’s Diary*, pp. xxx–xxxi.

Jonathan Bate, however, points out that plays marked with 'ne' between 1591 and 1594 'seem to have been genuinely new' and that it was only after late 1595 onwards that 'ne' was occasionally added beside an older play that was either new or new to the company performing it'.¹¹⁶ Bate points out that the only plays printed before 1594 that mentioned more than one company on the title-page were John Lyly's *Sapho and Phao* and *Campaspe*, both of which were published in 1584. The title-page of *Sapho and Phao* reads: 'Played before the Queenes Majestie on twelfe day at night by her Majesties children, and the children of Pasles'. That of *Campaspe* reads: 'Played before the Queenes Majestie on Shrove-tewsday, by her Majesties Children, and the Boyes of Paules'. In both cases the title-pages clearly state that they were joint productions. After *Titus Andronicus* the printed plays which named more than one company were Lyly's *Love's Metamorphosis* (1601) and Thomas Dekker's *Satiromastix* (1602). In both cases the different performances are clearly distinguished: the title-page of *Love's Metamorphosis* says 'First playd by . . . and now by'; that of *Satiromastix* mentions 'presented publikely, by . . . and privately, by'. In addition, the 1594 quarto of Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* does not refer to the production by Strange's men, even though the company performed it a number of times for Henslowe in 1592-93; its title-page only says 'As it was plaid by her Majesties servants'. George Peele's *Battle of Alcazar* was 'one of the most popular plays in Strange's repertory before the inhibition', but the title-page of the 1594 quarto only mentions the Admiral's men.¹¹⁷

Furthermore, Bate argues that when a play was performed many times, the published text 'liked to emphasize its popularity by speaking of the play "as it hath

¹¹⁶ Introduction to *Titus Andronicus*, Arden Shakespeare Series (London: Routledge, 1995; repr. Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1997), p. 70, n. 1.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

sundry times been played”’.¹¹⁸ For example, Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine, the Great* was printed in 1590 as ‘sundrie times showed upon Stage in the Citie of London’. It was reprinted in 1593 as ‘sundry times most stately shewed’. Two other plays printed before 1594 in a similar fashion are *The Troublesome Reign of King John* (1591) and *Fair Em* (1593?). In 1594 the following plays among others appeared with ‘sundry times’ on their title-pages: *A Knack to Know a Knave*, *The Taming of a Shrew*, *The Battle of Alcazar*, *Mother Bombie*, and *Edward II*. This emphasis is absent on the title-page of Danter’s 1594 edition of *Titus Andronicus*. ‘It becomes glaring’, says Bate, ‘when Q2 appears in 1600 “As it hath sundry times been played by the Right Honourable the Earle of Pembroke, the Earle of Darbie, the Earle of Sussex, and the Lorde Chamberlaine theyr Seruants” and Q3 in 1611 “As it hath sundry times beene plaide by the Kings Maiesties Seruants”’. Bate suggests that ‘sundry times’ is absent on the title-page of the 1594 edition but present on those of the 1600 and 1611 editions because ‘the play had not been performed sundry times by 1594, and that Q1 refers to a brand-new play performed for the first time by a large company which included “servants” who between them had loyalty to all three noblemen’.¹¹⁹

Bate concludes that ‘the 1594 title-page refers to performances not by three companies in sequence but by one company which included actors who had previously worked for the other two’, and that elements of Derby’s (formally Strange’s) men and Pembroke’s men may have been absorbed into Sussex’s for this season. Bate suspects that some actors from Derby’s men and Pembroke’s men who would have returned to London may have sought employment with the group who were performing for Henslowe.¹²⁰ Sussex’s men were at Winchester on 7 December and at the Rose from 27 December. ‘At Winchester they may have been a small-size

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 76.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 76.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 74.

touring company; by taking on elements of Strange's and Pembroke's, they would have been up to full London strength, and in a position to perform the one new play of the season — with its large cast and its emphasis on grand spectacle'.¹²¹ In Bate's view, therefore, *Titus Andronicus*, 'at least in the form in which we have it', was written in late 1593 and first performed in January 1594, and it was 'completely new at this time', although it is possible that an earlier version of the play (by Shakespeare or another) was in existence before June 1592 and that the performance in January 1594 was new 'only in the sense that it was of a text that was newly revised'.¹²²

Waith, as we have seen, argues that Henslowe would not have referred to the company performing *Titus Andronicus* as 'the earle of susex his men' if it was a combination of three companies. Bate, on the other hand, insists that Henslowe's mentioning only Sussex's men 'need not be significant'. Strange's men and the Lord Admiral's men, for example, performed 'in some sort of combination' at various times in the early 1590s, and were sometimes known only by the name of one of them, and sometimes by the name of the other. The companies 'went through many mutations from 1592 to 1594, and personnel only settled in the summer of 1594' when there emerged the Chamberlain's men with Shakespeare as their key playwright at the Theatre and the Admiral's men with Marlowe at the Rose.¹²³ Sussex's men disappear from the records after the Easter 1594 season during which they acted with the Queen's men.¹²⁴

As we have seen, Honigmann deduced the date of *Titus Andronicus* from a clue in Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*. He took 'five and twenty' and 'thirty' literally and dated Shakespeare's play to 1584. Schoenbaum, on the other hand, assumes that

¹²¹ For Bate's detailed discussion, see his introduction, pp. 74–5.

¹²² Bate, introduction, p. 78.

¹²³ Bate, p. 75.

¹²⁴ *Henslowe's Diary*, ed. by Foakes and Rickert, p. 21.

Jonson ‘rounds off his numbers, and perhaps overstates the antiquity of plays to underscore his point about the backwardness of audience taste’.¹²⁵ Nonetheless, Schoenbaum comments that Jonson’s reference to *Titus Andronicus* supports ‘a very early date’ for the play.¹²⁶ Like Schoenbaum, Bate regards ‘five and twenty’ and ‘thirty’ as exaggeration:

exaggeration is the trope of these Articles of Agreement: item one inflates length of performance, item two inflates ticket prices, item three inflates the age of *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Titus Andronicus*. Jonson’s point is that these plays are all the rage a generation ago and are still what people want now.¹²⁷

For Bate, Honigmann’s dating of *Titus Andronicus* is ‘an over-literal reading of the allusion in *Bartholomew Fair*’.¹²⁸

As we have seen, Bennett suggests that there may have been a confusion of two Titus plays in *A Knack* and that the comedy may allude to *Titus and Vespasian*. Bate argues that there is another allusion to this lost play in *A Knack*: ‘one line refers to Vespasian having his son’s hand cut off as punishment for beating a swain’. Bates concludes that the presence of allusions in the comedy ‘tells us not that *Titus [Andronicus]* was in existence by June 1592’ when *A Knack* was first performed, ‘but that it [*Titus*] was in existence when *A Knack* was “Newlie set foorth” in early 1594’.¹²⁹

To strengthen his dating of the play further, Bate focuses upon three local details:

[Firstly] the image of Lavinia’s husband’s dead body being used as a pillow while she is raped exactly replicates a detail in Nashe’s *Unfortunate Traveller* (completed 27 June 1593). [Secondly] the rare word ‘palliamment’ appears to have been coined by George Peele in his *The Honour of the Garter*, written for a ceremony in June 1593 and published by the end of the year; the word is used by Marcus at 1.1.185 [. . .] And [thirdly] on 31 March 1593 two puritans were taken to the scaffold, then reprieved at the last minute, taken down again

¹²⁵ *Compact Documentary Life*, p. 162.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

¹²⁷ Bate, introduction, p. 72

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 71–2 (p. 72).

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 73

and returned to prison, only to be taken back to Tyburn and hanged seven days later. This sounds remarkably like the Clown's gossip: "Ho, the gibbet-maker? He says that he hath taken them down again, for the man must not be hanged till the next week" (4.3.80-2).¹³⁰

These local details, argues Bate, lead us to a date of late 1593 to early 1594.

Plague attacked London again, and on 3 February 1594 the Privy Council gave an order that 'there be no more public plays or interludes exercised by any company whatsoever within the compass of five miles distance from London, till upon better likelihood and assurance of health farther direction may be given from use to the contrary'.¹³¹ The restraining order closed the Rose with effect from the 7th. On the 6th 'A Noble Roman Historye of Tytus Andronicus' was entered in the Stationers' Register by the printer John Danter. 'A likely explanation of this sequence of events', argues Bate, is:

in response to the imminent closure of the theatres so soon after the première of their successful new play, the players decided to make some money on it from another source and sold it to Danter, who rushed it into print while it was still new. If the public were to be prevented from seeing it, at least they could read it.¹³²

Bate claims that 'the nature of the printer's copy' gives further support to his dating.¹³³ It is 'generally agreed that Danter typeset his text from Shakespeare's *working draft manuscript*'. If this is the case for his 1594 edition of *Titus Andronicus*, then Shakespeare wrote the play 'which was ready for performance by late January 1594', and 'as soon as the theatrical copy was prepared and the parts for the actors were made out', the working draft of the play could be sold to Danter.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 77.

¹³¹ Quoted in *Compact Document Life*, p. 168.

¹³² Bate, introduction, p. 70.

¹³³ Ibid., p. 79.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 78 (emphasis added). According to Bate's chronology of Shakespeare's works, after writing the *Henry VI* plays before the closure of the theatres on 23 June 1592, Shakespeare wrote *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. Writing these poems took him to Ovid and to Roman history,¹³⁴ 'quite possibly for the first time since his schooldays'. Shakespeare, argues Bate, began 'a new play based on his classical reading' in late 1593 'with the prospect of the theatres reopening' — 'a Roman tragedy which has exceptionally strong stylistic and thematic links with *Lucrece*' (p. 78). For Shakespeare and Ovid, see Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), and my

Bate's theory was supported by Alan H. Nelson, who studied George Buc's inscriptions on the title-page of the anonymous play *A Pleasant Conceyted Comedie of George a Greene* at the Folger Shakespeare Library. Buc recorded Shakespeare's identification of the playwright as a minister who acted the title role in his own play:

Written by a minister, who ac<ted>
the piñer p[ar]t in it himself. Teste W. Shakespea<re>
Ed. Iuby saith that this play was made by Ro. Gree<ne>¹³⁵

George a Greene was performed by Sussex's men five times from 29 December 1593 to 22 January 1594, and was entered in the Stationers' Register on 1 April 1595. If, as Bate suggests, Shakespeare was present at the Rose during the winter season of 1593–4 as a playwright, then he had 'expert knowledge' concerning the authorship and the casting in *George a Greene*.¹³⁶

Richard III

Bate suggests that Shakespeare's 'next move' was to write *Richard III* in 1594 — 'his first tragedy for the new Chamberlain's Men'.¹³⁷ Thomas Stanley, first earl of Derby, figures in the play with Shakespeare's 'clever re-touching of the facts' in order 'to make Stanley's services to the incoming Tudor dynasty seem more momentous than they really were'. For example, the historical Stanley left it to his brother, William, to lead the Stanley forces at the battle of Bosworth. In the play it is Lord Strange, not William, who leads the forces. By changing leaders at the battle, Shakespeare 'manages to suggest that the direct ancestor of his patron, Lord Strange, decisively aided Queen Elizabeth's grandfather when he became king'. The play thus 'clearly

'What's in a Name?': *Shakespeare, Derrida and 'Romeo and Juliet'* (unpublished master's thesis, Drew University, USA, 1997), pp. 5–22.

¹³⁵ Transcribed in Alan H. Nelson, 'George Buc, William Shakespeare and the Folger *George a Greene*', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 49 (1998), 74–83 (p. 74). 'Teste' is Latin for 'witness'.

¹³⁶ Nelson, 'George Buc, William Shakespeare and the Folger *George a Greene*', 82.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 78–9. I should add that *Richard III* was entered as a tragedy in the Stationers' Register (1597) and that the title-page of the first quarto (1597) described it as such. The play was included among the histories in the 1623 Folio, but it was entitled *The Tragedy of Richard the Third*.

implies that Derby fought for his stepson and that this ensured Richmond's victory'.¹³⁸ In the play, history is in fact 'altered' so as 'to present Stanley in a favourable light'. *Richard III*, as John Jowett argues, 'looks as though it was written with this company [Lord Strange's men] and its patron in mind'.¹³⁹

Honigmann, however, preferred an earlier date for the play than Bate's proposed date of 1594. In his 1968 edition of *Richard III* Honigmann did not discuss the date of the play,¹⁴⁰ but in his *Shakespeare: The 'Lost Years'* he repeated Antony Hammond's dating of 1591. This date suited Honigmann, for it allowed him to propose Shakespeare's early link with Strange's men. Honigmann himself, however, did not discuss the date for the play in detail; he only mentioned very briefly that the play was 'dated 1591 by the New Arden editor'¹⁴¹ — and here Honigmann hides from us the issue of dating the play. As Jowett points out: '*Richard III* was clearly written in the early 1590s. A number of considerations help to place it more exactly within this period, though there is no evidence or argument that is entirely compelling'.¹⁴² It has been pointed out that *Richard III* was probably written soon after *3 Henry VI* since the former provides a sequel to the latter. The Arden editor Hammond's discussion of the date for *Richard III*, for example, begins with Dover Wilson's remark that 'Shakespeare had obviously begun *Richard III* in mind, if not on paper, when writing the soliloquy at *3 Henry VI*, 3.2.124ff'.¹⁴³ As we have seen, in 1592 William Wright published *Greenes Groats-worth of witte*. Janis Lull argues that '[a]lthough a London acting company may have taken the play on tour in the provinces during the summer of 1592', the pamphleteer's 'confidence in a theatrical experience shared with his

¹³⁸ Honigmann, *Shakespeare: The 'Lost Years'*, pp. 63–4

¹³⁹ Introduction to *Richard III*, Oxford Shakespeare Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 4.

¹⁴⁰ Honigmann, ed., *Richard III*, New Penguin Series (London: Penguin, 1968; repr. 1995).

¹⁴¹ Honigmann, *Shakespeare: The 'Lost Years'*, p. 63.

¹⁴² Introduction, p. 3.

¹⁴³ Quoted in Antony Hammond, introduction to *Richard III*, Arden Shakespeare Series (London: Methuen, 1981; repr. London: Thomson, 2002), p. 54.

readers suggests a milieu of city theatre-goers and repeated performances rather than of plays glimpsed out of town'.¹⁴⁴ Hammond insists that 'there is no point in satire unless its object can be recognised' by its readers or audiences.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that *3 Henry VI* was acted in London before the closure of the theatres on 23 June.

It is not as easy to establish the earliest date for *Richard III* as the latest date. The play uses material from the second edition of Holinshed's *Chronicles*, which appeared in 1587; Shakespeare's play, therefore, cannot have been written before that date. In IV.5 Christopher Urswick names nobles who fought bravely against Richard. There Sir James Blunt appears. In V.3 Sir James is named three times; he is called 'Sweet Blunt' once and 'good Captain Blunt' twice. Sidney Shanker points out that in Holinshed's *Chronicles* he is described simply as 'James Blunt, capteine of the . . . fortresse . . . of Calais'; Shanker thus argues that the title was 'furnished him by Shakespeare'.¹⁴⁶ According to Shanker, the Stratford Blunts of Stratford were related by marriage to the Combes 'with whom the poet was intimate'. In the will and testament of John Combe, in which a bequest was left to Shakespeare, one Sir Edward Blunt is named as one of the executors. The Stratford Blunt was knighted in 1588. Shanker thus suggests that Shakespeare may have been 'paying pretty compliments' to the Stratford Blunt on this occasion.¹⁴⁷ This is the earliest proposed date for *Richard III* that I have been able to trace. Interestingly, Honigmann did not rely on Shanker's theory. Since Sir James Blunt was not of Stratford, it seems unlikely that praising him in the play would have flattered the Blunts of Stratford.

¹⁴⁴ Introduction to *Richard III*, New Cambridge Shakespeare Series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 5.

¹⁴⁵ P. 56.

¹⁴⁶ Quoted in Sidney Shanker, 'Shakespeare Pays Some Compliments', *Modern Language Notes* 63 (1948), 540–1 (p. 540).

¹⁴⁷ Shanker, 540–1. Sir James Blunt was a grandson of Sir Walter Blunt, who appears in *1 Henry IV*. Needless to say, they are not of Stratford.

Harold F. Brooks suggests a date of 1591. He not only demonstrated verbal parallels between Marlowe's *Edward II* and Shakespeare's *Richard III* but also argued that 'there is little doubt' that Marlowe's *Edward II* draws on Shakespeare's *Richard III* rather than the other way around. His argument is based on Mortimer's speech describing how he became Protector:

They thrust vpon me the Protectorship,
And sue to me for that that I desire,
While at the councell table, graue enough,
And not vunlike a bashfull puretaine,
First I complaine of imbecilitie,
Saying it is, *onus quam grauissimum*,
Till being interrupted by my friends,
Suscepi that *prouinciam* as they terme it,
And to conclude, I am Protector now.¹⁴⁸

For Brooks, 'the crucial phrase is the comparison to "a bashfull puretaine"', for '[t]he mock Puritan Richard exists [. . .] nowhere but in Shakespeare's *Richard III*'.

Marlowe's career was cut short on 30 May 1593. *The Massacre at Paris* was acted on 30 January 1593.¹⁴⁹ Henslowe marked it 'ne', and Brooks suggests that Marlowe's play was most likely new when it was performed for Henslowe. Brooks argues that if Marlowe wrote *Doctor Faustus* after the first edition of its source came out around May 1592, 'there is not much room for *Edward II* later than spring of that year'. Since, according to Brooks's theory, *Richard III* must have existed before *Richard III*, he suggests a date of 1591 for Shakespeare's play.¹⁵⁰

Hammond, whose proposed date for *Richard III* Honigmann favours, relies heavily on Brooks's theory.¹⁵¹ Wells and Taylor, however, argue that what Brooks and Hammond emphasise as the key parallel between Marlowe's *Edward II* and Shakespeare's *Richard III* depends upon 'no more than Machiavellian hypocrisy

¹⁴⁸ Quoted in Harold F. Brooks, 'Marlowe and Early Shakespeare', in *Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by Brian Morris, Mermaid Critical Commentaries Series (London: Ernest Benn, 1968), pp. 65–94 (p. 73).

¹⁴⁹ *Henslowe's Diary*, ed. by Foakes and Rickert, p. 20.

¹⁵⁰ 'Marlowe and Early Shakespeare', pp. 77–8.

¹⁵¹ Introduction to *Richard III*, pp. 57–61.

masquerading as a “bashfull puretain” — a notion hardly unique to Shakespeare, or unattractive to Marlowe’.¹⁵² In addition, they point out:

No documentary evidence, or certain allusion, dates [*Richard III*] in the pre-plague period — a silence which seems to us remarkable, given the play’s evident later popularity and impact. Moreover, it differs from all the certain pre-plague plays in requiring a smaller cast, of the size normal in all Shakespeare’s plays after c. 1592. For this reason we have placed it after *I Henry VI* and *Titus*, assuming that it was not begun until after the theatres were closed in June 1592.¹⁵³

They thus propose a date of 1592–3. ‘This conclusion’, as they add, ‘accords well with the supposition, reasonable though not demonstrable, that the publication of *The True Tragedy of Richard the Third* (1594 [. . .]) was designed to exploit the success of Shakespeare’s play — a supposition rather more difficult to credit if *Richard III* had been in existence since 1590–1’.¹⁵⁴

Honigmann cast light upon the characterisation of Stanley but neglected the roles of the ancestors of another theatre patron, the earl of Pembroke. In IV.5 his ancestors Sir Walter Herbert and the earl of Pembroke are introduced among the soldiers who resort to Richmond. The names of these soldiers are ‘scattered across the accounts of events leading to the battle of Bosworth in Shakespeare’s sources’, but the list in his play ‘is selected and distilled in such a way as to make praise of the Pembroke family unmistakable’. Jowett comments:

The passages in question are not firmly integrated with the rest of the play, and relatively speaking at least, they look like afterthoughts. [. . .] Apart from the short catalogue of the dead in the final scene, it is the only such listing of characters not involved in the action, and it comes in a passage [. . .] that could be cut out without loss.¹⁵⁵

Furthermore, ‘the source material is augmented’ in V.4 where ‘for no apparent reason’, Richmond sends a command to Pembroke to attend him on the night before the battle. ‘This is something of a loose end’, Jowett comments, because ‘the

¹⁵² *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 117.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

¹⁵⁵ Jowett, introduction, pp. 5–6.

telescoped but continuous night sequence offers no opportunity' to hold such a conference. Shakespeare's intention seems to have been 'to strengthen the impression' that Pembroke, like Stanley, is a key military figure 'in the establishment of the Tudor monarchy, and the future king's closest confidant'. As Jowett points out:

In the Folio, the second Pembroke passage is again preceded by a mention of Herbert. This time Herbert, on stage with Richmond's followers, is picked out as one of Richmond's three night-time companions: 'My Lord of Oxford, you Sir William Brandon, / And your [*sic*] Sir Walter Herbert stay with me' [. . .]¹⁵⁶

The focus on Herbert and Pembroke may suggest that Henry Herbert, second earl of Pembroke, was the patron of the company that was about to act the play.¹⁵⁷

How should we explain the nature of the difference between the quarto and the folio? One assumption is that 'the manuscript on which the Folio text is based represents the play before its first performances, and therefore that the text does not simultaneously represent different points in its stage history'. Another is that the script could have been revised with the two Pembroke passages for 'a delayed first performance or a revival by Pembroke's Men'.¹⁵⁸ Andrew Gurr, for example, is 'almost convinced' that Shakespeare was working as an actor with Pembroke's men in 1592–3.¹⁵⁹

The relationship between Pembroke's men and Strange's men, as we have seen, is as uncertain as that between Shakespeare and any of the companies of the early 1590s. It has been suggested that Henry Herbert's wife, Mary *née* Sidney promoted the establishment of his company. Shakespeare biographers and critics, with the exception of the Sidney as well as Shakespeare biographer Katherine Duncan-Jones, appear to be rather unfamiliar with Mary's literary life. In her youth Mary received 'an outstanding education, following the standard humanist curriculum of the

¹⁵⁶ P. 6. In F1 the lines appear in *Scena Secunda* (on p. 201).

¹⁵⁷ Jowett, introduction, p. 6.

¹⁵⁸ Jowett, introduction, p. 6.

¹⁵⁹ *The Shakespearian Playing Companies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 271–2.

classics, the Church Fathers, and Latin, French, and Italian language and literature'. She may also have studied Greek and Hebrew, although the evidence is inconclusive. She served Elizabeth at court for less than two years before Leicester arranged her marriage to Herbert, who had recently become a widower. On 21 April 1577, when she was 15, she became the countess of Pembroke.¹⁶⁰

On 5 May 1586 Sir Henry Sidney died, and his wife soon followed him, dying on 9 August. By that autumn Mary became ill; her brother Phillip, serving under Leicester's command in the Low Countries, was distressed by the report that she was dying. She recovered only to learn that Philip had been wounded at Zutphen on 23 September. Although he was expected to survive, he developed gangrene and died on 17 October.¹⁶¹

Sidney's death was mourned as that of a Protestant martyr both in England and on the Continent. As a woman, Mary could not participate in the public mourning for her brother — neither at the funeral held on 16 February 1587, nor by contributing to the series of elegies issued by English and Dutch universities. But she began her literary work to honour him; she wrote elegies for him, completed his paraphrase of the psalms (which she dedicated to Queen Elizabeth), encouraged many of the poets who celebrated her brother, and assumed responsibility for publication of his works.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Gurr gives the wrong year for Mary's marriage; he writes she became the widowed earl's wife 'in 1586, when she was 25' (*The Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 267). At Pembroke's Wiltshire estate of Wilton she welcomed frequent visits from her own family including her brother Philip, who had recently offended Elizabeth by his opposition to the proposed match with the French Catholic duke of Alençon (later duke of Anjou). During his visit Sidney apparently began writing his *Arcadia*, and his *Astrophil and Stella* was circulated at Wilton. He may also have begun paraphrasing the psalms while visiting his sister. It has been suggested that he may have left several of his manuscripts with his sister.

¹⁶¹ Margaret P. Hannay, Noel J. Kinnamon, and Michael G. Brennan, introduction to *The Collected Works of Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), I, pp. 1–11. For full-length biographies of Mary Sidney, see: Frances Berkeley Young, *Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke* (London: David Nutt, 1912); Margaret P. Hannay, *Philip's Phoenix: Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). G. F. Waller has a chapter on Mary's life in *Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke: A Critical Study of her Writing and Literary Milieu* (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1979), pp. 1–29.

¹⁶² Hannay, Kinnamon and Brennan, I, pp. 6–12.

After his death, the poets who used to seek his patronage turned to other patrons, including his sister. This 'transference of patronage' made Mary 'the first non-royal woman in England to receive a significant number of dedications'. Furthermore, she seems to have encouraged other writers, particularly those in her family or household. Her brother Philip, dedicating to her *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, said that he had written it because 'you desired me to doo it, and your desire, to my heart is an absolute commaundement'. Her son William wrote poems, which were collected and published by John Donne the younger in 1660.¹⁶³ Her daughter Anne died in her early twenties (about 1606). Although no works are extant, she is believed to have been a writer; '[Thomas] Moffet describes her as partaking in story-telling sponsored by the countess at Wilton, and the Bright MS includes anonymous poems possibly written by a woman in the Sidney circle, whether Lady Anne or one of Pembroke's nieces'. Her niece and goddaughter, Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth, daughter of Robert Sidney and Barbara Gamage, was also her favourite literary protégé. Her children's tutors, the secretaries, and even the family physician and retainers wrote poems. Her husband did not write poetry, but he provided 'the financial and political backing that constituted her patronage'.¹⁶⁴

In 1590/1 Mary translated into blank verse the French play *Marc Antoine* written in alexandrine by Robert Garnier. Her translation was the first dramatisation of

¹⁶³ *Poems Written by the Right Honorable William earl of Pembroke* (London, 1660), Wing P1128.

¹⁶⁴ Hannay, Kinnamon and Brennan, I, pp. 12–3. Her younger brother Robert wrote a manuscript of poems and addressed it 'For the Countess of Pembroke', but 'this inscription may have been an address rather than an abbreviated dedication' (Hannay, Kinnamon and Brennan, I, p. 13, n. 53). For Mary's patronage, see Mary Ellen Lamb, 'The Countess of Pembroke's Patronage', *English Literary Renaissance* 12 (1982), 162–79; Hannay, *Philip's Phoenix: Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke*, pp. 60, 78–9, 109–10, 112, and 124–9. See also Lamb's doctoral thesis 'The Countess of Pembroke's Patronage' (Columbia University, 1976).

the story of Antony and Cleopatra in England.¹⁶⁵ In 1592 Simon Jewell, a player in Pembroke's men acknowledged her as a patron in his will: 'Item my share of such money as shalbe [*sic*] given by ladie Pembroke [*sic*] or by her meanes I will shalbe distributed and paide towards my burial and other charges [. . .]'¹⁶⁶ J. A. B. Somerset believes it to be clear evidence for her sponsorship of Pembroke's men, claiming that it was 'part of a bequeathable [*sic*] asset — his share in the company'. Margaret P. Hannay similarly observes that Jewell's will 'demonstrates that the countess had some personal responsibility for the players'.¹⁶⁷

Gurr objects, noting that Pembroke's company 'is not mentioned as participating in her "Astraea" entertainment, which was probably held at Ramsbury for Elizabeth's visit on 27–9 August 1592, where, if she was interested in using them, she might have been expected to show their paces'.¹⁶⁸ What Gurr does not tell us, however, is that the date for Mary's sixty-line poem (or play) 'A Dialogue between two Shepheards, Thenot and Piers, in Praise of Astrea' is a matter of conjecture.¹⁶⁹ John Nichols suggests that 'the Dialogue was probably written in 1600, when the Queen meditated a Progress into North Wiltshire'. But this projected visit to Ramsbury was cancelled, so the poem 'was perhaps recited in 1601 in Aldersgate

¹⁶⁵ Mary's translation (*Antonius*) is available in *The Collected Works of Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke*, I, pp. 152–207. Although Mary is usually an accurate translator, she made a number of alterations in her translation. See Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan, I, pp. 147–51 ('*Antonius: Fidelity to Originals*'). For the differences of the treatment of drama between Mary and her contemporary dramatists (including Shakespeare), see Hannay, *Philip's Phoenix: Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke*, pp. 119–21.

¹⁶⁶ Quoted in Mary Edmond, 'Pembroke's Men', *Review of English Studies* 25 (1974), 129–36 (p. 130).

¹⁶⁷ Somerset, 'The Lords President, their Activists and Companies: Evidence from Shropshire', *Elizabethan Theatre* 10 (1988), 93–111 (p. 109); Hannay, *Philip's Phoenix: Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 124; Scott McMillin, 'Simon Jewell and the Queen's Men', *Review of English Studies* 27 (1976), 174–8. Jonson received a £20 annual gift from William Herbert for books (Mary Ellen Lamb, 'The Countess of Pembroke's Patronage', *English Literary Renaissance* 12 (1982), 162–79 (p. 166)).

¹⁶⁸ *The Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 267.

¹⁶⁹ The text is available in Hannay, Kinnamon and Brennan, I, pp. 89–91.

Street', Pembroke's residence in London.¹⁷⁰ The title as first printed by Francis Davison in *A Poetical Rapsody* (1602) reads 'made by the excellent Lady Mary Countesse of Pembroke, at the Queenes Maiesties being at her house at Anno 15 ', indicating that 1599 is the latest possible date of composition.¹⁷¹ Chambers proposes a date of 1592 when the queen visited Ramsbury in August, and I believe that Gurr's remark relies on Chambers's proposition.¹⁷² Mary C. Erler, however, presents a more convincing case for a date of 1599, drawing on records of the intended progress to Wilton in August and on a number of parallels with Sir John Davies's *Hymnes of Astraea*, twenty-six acrostic poems presented to Elizabeth on Accession Day, 17 November 1599.¹⁷³ Hannay, Kinnamon and Brennan argue that Mary 'boldly departed from convention in writing her own pastoral dialogue, so that Queen Elizabeth would be greeted at Wilton by her host's own words'.¹⁷⁴

In 1599 Mary wrote another poem in praise of Elizabeth.¹⁷⁵ By presenting this poetic meditation on the psalms to the queen, Mary 'continued the tradition of identifying the monarch as a symbol of piety, an image that the Tudors had assiduously cultivated'.¹⁷⁶ At the end of the 1590s Mary may have had another reason to write two poems in praise of Elizabeth. In 1601 she wrote to the queen:

Pardon I humbly beceech yow this first boldnes of yowr humblest Creture, and lett it please that devine goodnes which can thus enlive[n] and comfort my life to vouchsafe to know that not presumption, O no, but the vehement working desire of a thankfull harte so to acknowlidg[e] it selfe for so hygh and presious [*sic*] a favor receved hath guided my trembling hand to offer these worthless wordes to yowr exelent eies: wherein I woold, if any words coold, present a thankfullnes unexpresible; not onely for my selfe but for my sonn who of yowr Majestys ever Prinsly [*sic*] Grace yow ar pleased to take into yowr Care, to fasshen fitt to live in

¹⁷⁰ *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, 3 vols (London: John Nichols & Sons, 1788–1821), III, p. 529.

¹⁷¹ STC 6373, sig. B5a.

¹⁷² *The Elizabethan Stage*, III, p. 337.

¹⁷³ 'Davies's *Astraea* and Other Contexts of the Countess of Pembroke's "A Dialogue"', *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 30 (1990), 41–61.

¹⁷⁴ I, p. 81.

¹⁷⁵ The poem has no title but is now known as 'Even now that Care' from its first line. The text is available in *The Collected Works of Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke*, I, p. 102.

¹⁷⁶ Hannay, Kinnamon and Brennan, I, p. 92.

yowr sight, to add and supply whatsoever want or defect may be in him. for which both my lord and I doe umble [*sic*] our selves at yowr hyghnes feete.¹⁷⁷

Mary spent little time at court after her marriage, but she presented to Elizabeth two poems using Protestant iconography to praise the queen. In 1599 Mary may have written 'Astraea', as she may have already been eager to place her son William at court. Whatever purpose Mary may have had, it is not surprising that Gurr cannot find evidence for Pembroke's Men's participation in the entertainment in 1592 if, as modern editors now assume, Mary wrote 'Astrea' in 1599 for a private occasion at Wilton.

Gurr has a different theory for the establishment of Pembroke's men. I believe that it is worthwhile to cite it:

I think that one precipitating factor was very likely to have been the quarrel which James Burbage had with Edward Alleyn in May 1591. It took Alleyn and Strange's Men away from Burbage's Theatre and eventually to Henslowe at the Rose. That left Burbage with a vacancy for a playing company, and probably higher expectations than the other companies then camped around London could readily supply. And he had a son, only a year younger than Alleyn, who had been playing in Strange's but who out of family loyalty left Strange's to stand by his father [. . .] So it is conceivable that old Burbage moved to set up a new company led by his son under a new patron. He had himself been wearing Henry Carey's livery in 1584, but could not appeal to him for patronage now because Carey's policy as Chamberlain was not to give his own name to any company. So Burbage may well have arranged to form a new company by applying to Pembroke to sponsor them. What makes that move fairly plausible is Burbage's long life as a Leicester's man and Herbert's long intimacy with Robert Dudley [. . .] Henry Herbert was the obvious choice for a former Leicester's player to turn to as a new patron who was a senior noble, a Privy Councillor, and a playgoer, but who was not currently patronizing any of the major London companies.¹⁷⁸

Gurr suggests that Burbage may have known Mary Herbert's inclinations. But I believe that it is more than just possible, for Mary's literary patronage was known as widely as her brother's.¹⁷⁹ As we have seen, many writers sought her patronage.

¹⁷⁷ Transcribed in Hannay, Kinnamon and Brennan, I, pp. 290–2 (p. 291).

¹⁷⁸ *The Shakespearian Playing Companies*, pp. 267–8.

¹⁷⁹ I am not suggesting here that Burbage may have approached Mary to seek her intercession. It should also be added that I am neither supporting nor dismissing Gurr's 'rivalry' theory.

Among them was Thomas Nashe. In 1591 he requested her favour in his address to Thomas Newman's edition of *Astrophil and Stella*:

Amongst the which fayre sister of *Phoebus*, & eloquent secretary to the Muses, most rare Countesse of Pembroke thou art not to be omitted: whom Artes doe adore as a second *Minerva*, and our Poets extoll as the Patronesse of their inuention.¹⁸⁰

Mary was an influential patron, but it should be emphasised that her patronage, as Mary Ellen Lamb has shown, was 'not as extensive as current literary histories imply'.¹⁸¹ When Nashe did not receive her patronage, probably because his edition was unauthorised,¹⁸² he launched his attack on female patrons:

I hate those female braggarts that contend to haue all the Muses beg at their doores, and with Doues, delight euermore to looke themselues in the glasse of vaine-glorie; yet by their sides weare continually Barbarie purses, which neuer ope[n] to any but pedanticall Parasites.¹⁸³

For Nashe, Mary was one of 'those female braggarts' who 'neuer ope[ned]' their 'Barbarie purses'. Gurr suggests that Mary may have intervened to act as patron to the new company: her husband's health was declining, and '[t]hat decline might argue against his taking any initiative in setting up a new company for himself, so his wife's intervention cannot be discounted'. Her family's longstanding patronage of drama probably made her more likely to sponsor it than to stand against the popular theatre. For the most part, however, Mary encouraged those around her and did not seek to expand her patronage outside her close circle.¹⁸⁴ To what degree she took initiative thus remains uncertain. Whatever Mary's role in this matter may have been,

¹⁸⁰ Epistle to Syr P. S. *His Astrophel and Stella* (London, 1591), STC 22536, sig. A4a.

¹⁸¹ Lamb, 'The Countess of Pembroke's Patronage', 163.

¹⁸² Apparently, this edition was suppressed. Newman appears to have been forced to reprint a revised edition (STC 22537) removing his own and Nashe's prefaces as well as the 'Sundry other rare Sonnets of diuers Noblemen and Gentlemen'. See William A. Ringler, ed., *The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), pp. 542–6.

¹⁸³ Dedication to Elizabeth Carey, *Christs Teares* (1593), in *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. by Ronald B. McKerrow and F. P. Wilson, 4 vols (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), II, pp. 7–175 (pp. 10–11).

¹⁸⁴ Lamb, 'The Countess of Pembroke's Patronage', 116; Hannay, *Philip's Phoenix*, pp. 112 and 124. Edmund Spenser was an exception, but his association with Mary is confined to his works that praise the Sidneys, particularly her brother Philip (Hannay, *Philip's Phoenix*, p. 112).

Pembroke's men was one of the only two companies asked to perform during the Christmas season at court in 1592–3 (the other being Strange's men based at the Rose). Gurr suggests the company 'was most likely at the Theatre, and was very likely led by the son of the Theatre's owner'.¹⁸⁵

As opposed to Gurr's 'rivalry' theory, Chambers and George, as we have seen, present an 'offshoot' theory. Ironically, as Jowett points out, the latter theory 'would be consistent with Gurr's own inference that *The Contention* (otherwise known as 2 *Henry VI*) and *Richard Duke of York* began as Strange's plays and then went to Pembroke's, and also with the mixed complexion of praise [of Stanley and two ancestors of the earl of Pembroke] in *Richard III*'.¹⁸⁶ Whatever the relationship between Strange's men and Pembroke's men, the quarto and the folio seem to indicate that the play was initially written for Strange's men and then was given 'finishing touches towards its close' to 'make it suitable for the new Pembroke company'. This theory would place *Richard III* only after the formation of Pembroke's men, and it leads us to the proposition that Honigmann's account (based on Hammond's theory) is an unlikely scenario.

Strange's men were performing at the Rose from February till June when plague closed the theatres. According to Henslowe's record Strange's men did not act the play during the period in question. Although they did perform a play called *Buckingham* between 30 December 1593 and 27 January 1594, Jowett notes that it seems unlikely to have been Shakespeare's *Richard III*. If Pembroke's men were the first company to act the play, they may have done so during their tour of the provinces in 1592. Jowett conjectures that its first performance in London may have been postponed because of the plague at least until Christmas. In fact Jowett's theory

¹⁸⁵ *The Shakespearian Playing Companies*, pp. 268–9.

¹⁸⁶ Introduction, p. 7.

provides ‘a possible explanation as to why the theatrically allusive pamphlets of 1592 such as Thomas Nashe’s *Pierce Penniless* and [. . .] *Groatsworth of Wit* make no reference to it’. As Jowett honestly admits, ‘there are many “if”s in such an account’, and we should accept that uncertainty remains.¹⁸⁷

H. Anthony Holden’s Tabloid Biography

Anthony Holden, in his article on the discovery of a portrait of the young Southampton (illus. 14), notes that the sitter, whom art experts now believe to be somewhere between the age of seventeen and twenty, is dressed as a woman, wearing a laced dress, lipstick, rouge and an earring, and has long hair. Holden declares that these features solve the mystery of Shakespeare’s sexuality and his relationship to his patron.¹⁸⁸ To the contrary, the features which he points out do not reveal either Southampton’s sexuality or Shakespeare’s. This article, like his previous articles and book (which I closely examine in the present thesis), presents what I call ‘tabloid Shakespeare’.

It is doubtful that in the portrait Southampton is wearing a *woman’s* dress. Many gentlemen and courtiers wore similar dresses with elaborate lace collars. There are numerous examples. See, for example, the portraits of Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester by Nicholas Hilliard (National Portrait Gallery), Henry, prince of Wales by Robert Peake, the Elder (London Museum), Henry, prince of Wales by Peake (National Portrait Gallery), Charles I as duke of York by Peake (Ampleforth Abbey), Charles I as prince of Wales by Peake (University of Wales), Sir John Kennedy by Marcus Gheeraerts, the younger (duke of Bedford), Robert Sidney, first earl of

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁸⁸ ‘A she or not a she . . . that is the question for Shakespeare’, *The Observer*, 21 April 2002, main section, p. 1; ‘That’s no lady, that’s . . .’, *The Observer Review*, 21 April 2002, p. 5.

Leicester, by Gheeraerts (marquess of Bath), Sir William Sidney by William Larkin (the Viscount de L'Isle), Richard Sackville, third duke of Dorset (Trustees of Margaret, countess of Suffolk), and Edward Sackville, fourth earl of Dorset by Larkin (Trustees of Margaret, countess of Suffolk).

The portrait of Edward Sackville, fourth earl of Dorset shows similar features such as red lips and pink cheeks. The portrait of Philip Herbert, fourth earl of Pembroke (also by Larkin) shows red lips. These features can be seen in portraits of *young* men, and they seem to convey the healthy physical status of the sitters rather than their sexuality. Wearing earrings was fashionable among men in early modern England. Shakespeare, John Donne, the earl of Somerset, the earl of Devonshire, and Sir Edward Hoby all wear earrings in their portraits.

Although many men appear to have kept their hair short, there were exceptions. The portraits of George Clifford, third earl of Cumberland by Nicholas Hilliard (National Maritime Museum, Greenwich), Lord John Bellasyss by Gilbert Jackson, and an unknown gentleman by Cornelius Johnson show these men with long hair.

The portraits I have mentioned demonstrate that the features which Holden points out do not tell us either Southampton's sexuality or Shakespeare's.¹⁸⁹ It is clear that his comments are biased heavily by his socially constructed sense of fashion and of masculinity and femininity in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Moreover, it is equally clear that he attempts to *homosexualise* Shakespeare and Southampton's relationship, which he considers to have been 'of striking intensity'.¹⁹⁰ It is part of Holden's tabloid Shakespeare and a product of popular journalism. The only

¹⁸⁹ Most of these portraits can be found in Roy Strong's *The English Icon: Elizabethan & Jacobean Portraiture*, Studies in British Art series (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; New York: Pantheon, 1969) and *Tudor & Jacobean Portraits* 2 vols (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1969), II.

¹⁹⁰ Holden, *William Shakespeare: His Work and Life* (London: Little, Brown, 1999), p. 111.

documentary evidence regarding the relationship between Shakespeare and Southampton consists of Shakespeare's dedications to Southampton in *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594). Southampton, of course, is believed to be one of the two best candidates for the young man in Shakespeare's sonnets. Yet Duncan-Jones has presented a strong case for the other candidate, William Herbert, third earl of Pembroke.¹⁹¹ What is more, it remains debatable whether or not Shakespeare's sonnets are truly autobiographical. Both Duncan-Jones and Peter Holland argue that the composition of sonnets required a mixture of poetical conventions and autobiographical elements.¹⁹² None of these pieces of basic, yet important, knowledge about Shakespeare's sonnets and the sonnet tradition appears to be part of Holden's consideration.

Since the publication of his tabloid biography of the dramatist, Holden has been enjoying the status of Shakespearean celebrity. It is unknown whether the editor of *The Observer* commissioned Holden to write an article on the portrait or Holden contacted the editor. If the former is the case, it suggests that the editor has blindly accepted Holden's celebrity. Nevertheless, *The Observer* has promoted Holden's celebrity further despite the fact that his article discloses lack of knowledge of Elizabethan portraits on the most basic level and misguides his readers. This proves that the mass media is a powerful cultural agent that can circulate ideas even if they are false.

¹⁹¹ Introduction to *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, Arden Shakespeare Series (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1997), pp. 54–69.

¹⁹² Discussion at the conference 'Early Modern Lives: Biography and Autobiography in the Renaissance and the Seventeenth Century' (London, 28 June 2002).



14. Henry Wriothesley, third earl of Southampton
(used to be believed to be Lady Norton, daughter of the bishop of Winton)

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* indicates the edition used in the present thesis.

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